

A Theory of Mosque Architecture with Special
Emphasis on the Problems of Designing Mosques for
the Modern Sunnī Muslim Society

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In the name of

Allah

*The Most Merciful
and*

The Most Compassionate

True piety does not consist of turning your faces towards the East or West - but truly pious is he who believes in God, and the Last Day, and the Angels, and revelation, and the prophets; and spend his substance- however much he himself may cherish it upon his near of kin, and the orphans and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and the freeing of human beings from bondage; and is constant in prayer, and renders the purifying dues; and truly pious are they who keep their promises whenever they promise, and are patient in misfortune and hardship and in time of peril: it is they that have proved themselves true, and it is they , they who are conscious of God.

The Holy Qur'ān, Surā 2, Verse 177

This thesis has been composed by myself and is my original work.

Mohamad Tajuddin
bin
Haji Mohamad Rasdi

ABSTRACT

The primary aim of the thesis is the development of an architectural framework for planning and designing mosques from the orthodox Sunnī Islamic perspective.

In the light of the present resurgence in Islamic thoughts towards a return to the fundamental teachings of the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet Muhammad's Sunna, the role and design of mosques have been questioned as to whether they fulfil the eternal values of Islam for Muslims living in the modern world. A survey of the literature on mosques suggests two different concerns about the idea of the mosque and its purpose. One view, which is mostly held by the public at large and professional architects supported by architectural historians, maintains that the mosque is a house of God whose main function is to cater for the performance of prayers. The other view, which is mostly held by Muslim intellectuals, maintains that the mosque's main role should be directed towards the development of the Muslim community in all aspects of life.

The thesis adopts the approach that the design of mosques must be based on its eternal idea interpreted within the constraints of the needs of the modern Muslim society. The eternal idea of the mosque is derived from an understanding of the Prophet's conception of the mosque and the historical needs in his life time. The eternal idea of the mosque is also based on the meanings of worship in Islam which comprises the rituals associated with the mosque and the Muslim's individual and social obligations.

The first part of the thesis presents the arguments that the past and present works of architectural history concerning the architecture of the mosque are of little value to the aims of the thesis. The second part presents a reinterpretation of the *Qur'ān*, the *Al-Ḥadīth*, the meanings of the rituals and social responsibilities of the Muslims related to the initial concept and the eternal idea of the mosque. The final part contains proposals for architectural guidelines for planning and designing mosques in the modern Sunnī Muslim society. The final part of the thesis also presents a criticism of present mosque designs within the framework of the prescribed guidelines.

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Notes on Transliteration

Extracts from translated works of the *ḥadīths* are quoted directly without any change in the transliteration system which the translators have used.

The transliteration system used in this thesis is entirely based on that of The Encyclopaedia of Islam as follows:

LIST OF TRANSLITERATIONS

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC CHARACTERS :

Consonants				Long Vowels		Diphthongs	
ء	د (except when initial)	ذ	z	ق	ā	اَ	aw
ب	b	س	s	ك	ū	اِ	ay
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	ī		
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م		ـِـ	īyy (final form ī)
ج	dj	ض	ḍ	ن	Short Vowels		
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	ـَـ	a	ـُـ
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	ـِـ	u	ـِـ
د	d	ع	ʿ	ي	ـِـ	i	ـِـ
ذ	dh	غ	gh				
ر	r	ف	f				

ٓ a; at (construct state)
 ال (article), al- and 'l- (even before the antero-palatals)

The Encyclopaedia of Islam edited by C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986

Chapter One

THE CRISIS OF MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE

Introduction

The mosque is the most important building in Islam. In the early days of Islam the statement was true in every aspect of the Islamic culture but in the present day it is true only in the sense that the mosque is an architectural symbol catering for the religious rites of the Muslim society. In the present age of Islamic resurgence in the Muslim world, the institution of the mosque has come under serious criticism from Muslim intellectuals who are calling for a reassessment of its present conservative role in developing the Muslim society towards a greater consciousness and understanding of Islam. These scholars have called for a serious reevaluation of the mosque institutions using the model of the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the first generation of Muslims. This strategy is said to be in line with the general call for Muslims to adopt the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet in every aspect of their lives. The thesis is an attempt towards defining the framework for the architectural planning and design of mosques to cater for the present lifestyles of Muslims whose system of values is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Prophet.

There are two main problems related to the planning and design of mosques. The present design guidelines used for this purpose are valid only for a traditional society of the past. There is no attempt as yet to address the needs and the problems of the modern Muslim society. The second problem is that clients and architects of mosques at the present time subscribe to the idea that the mosque is a sanctuary or a piece of religious architecture as defined by modern historians of the

West whose attitude towards and understanding of Islam are highly questionable. Furthermore, the historians' interest in the mosque has frequently bordered on the aesthetic problems directly related to their personal agenda in defining the development of architectural styles. The first problem thus results in mosques designed contrary to the needs of the modern Muslims' lifestyles while the second encourages designs devoid of the eternal values of Islam related to community living.

The thesis adopts the approach that the architectural planning and design framework of mosques in the present time must be based on the needs of the modern Muslim society and on the eternal idea of the mosque. The eternal idea of the mosque embodies the eternal values of the Muslim's individual and collective life which is valid for all times and places. In order to identify the eternal idea of the mosque, it is important to consider the Prophet's conception of the mosque during his lifetime. This initial conception is essential because the Prophet and his Companions are considered the individual and communal models *par excellence* of the Islamic way of life. The functions of the Prophet's mosque must be evaluated in order to separate those that were derived out of necessity in the historical context of the time and those that constituted the eternal needs of the Muslim individual and community.

The aim of defining the initial conception and the eternal idea of the mosque is achieved through a reinterpretation of the doctrinal sources of Islam concerning these issues. The *Qur'ān*, the *Al-Hadīth*, and the juristic rulings of religious scholars are used to identify the early functions of the mosque and to ascertain the relationship between the individual and collective responsibilities of the Muslims with these functions. The eternal idea of the mosque is shown to be a reflection of the Prophet's conception of the mosque as a centre for the total development of the Muslim community in all aspects of life and not as the present idea of a building mainly for the performance of ritual worship. The idea of the mosque as the centre for community development results in a design framework totally different from that of a house of worship. The final product of the thesis is a guideline for the planning and design of the mosque as the centre for community development based on an architectural programme specifically derived from the needs of the modern Muslim society within the confines of the eternal values of Islam.

The doctrinal sources used in this thesis are interpreted according to the Sunnī approach to Islam. The main religious sources used are the modern Sunnī exegesis of the *Qur'ān* and the translated works of *ḥadīth* compilations of Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Ishaq and Malik bin Anas. The modern work of Islamic jurisprudence by Syed Sabiq is primarily used in referring to the understanding of the rites and rituals of Islam because it contains a summary of the views from the four schools of thought in Sunnī Islam and which accepts only the juristic rulings which are based on the *Qur'ān* and authentic *ḥadīths*. The Sunnī framework is chosen simply because its framework is accepted by the majority of Muslims in the world. *Ṣūfī* and the *Shī'a* approaches to the interpretation of the doctrinal sources are different from those of the Sunnī Muslim and it is for this reason that their views concerning the mosque differ. Architectural historians who claim to interpret the mosque from the perspective of Islam are often actually using aspects of *Ṣūfī* and *Shī'a* approaches. This has, therefore, resulted in views that are in the minority and in many cases unacceptable to the vast majority of Sunnī Muslims.

The thesis has nine chapters. The first contains a discussion of the crisis of mosque architecture in the Muslim world. The discussion of the crisis is preceded by a brief history of the architectural development of the mosque which is then followed by a description of the present functions of the mosque in the Muslim society. The chapter ends with a description of the approach adopted in the thesis.

In the second chapter, a survey is presented of mosque architectural interpretation by various historians beginning from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. The aim of this chapter is to present the arguments that the works of these historians cannot be used by the present study since their aims are different from those of the thesis. They are mainly interested about the aesthetic development of the mosque and reject the Prophet's mosque as possessing the important aspects of the initial conception of the mosque.

The third chapter contains an analysis of the *Qur'ānic* Verses related to the idea of the mosque. Contrary to the historian's opinion that the *Qur'ān* does not provide any indication of the idea of the mosque in Islam, it is shown, in this chapter, that the main characteristics of the initial conception of the mosque can be found there. The fourth

chapter contains a discussion on the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet which reinforce the findings of the third chapter. The two chapters together lead to the conclusion that the initial conception of the mosque approaches that of a centre for community development. The fifth and sixth chapters provide the necessary verification of this conclusion as they present the relationship between the mosque and the meaning of the ritual and non-ritual forms of worship which are the individual and collective responsibilities of the Muslim.

A summary of the findings of the previous chapters is given in chapter seven along with a discussion on the initial conception of the mosque within the historical context of Islam's early struggle. The chapter also contains a discussion of how this initial conception of the mosque had changed in the history of the Muslim people to suit the needs of the times and also how the influences of the patrons, designers and sectarian movements have departed from this early concept. The chapter ends with a discussion of what the characteristics of the eternal idea of the mosque are in relation to the historical development of the mosque and its initial concept.

Chapter eight contains a description of the planning and design guidelines of mosques based on a detailed architectural programme of activities. This programme is derived basically from the eternal idea of the mosque defined in the previous chapters and on the assumed needs of the modern Sunnī Muslim society. The description of the programme is preceeded by a brief discussion on how the present functions and design of the mosque depart from its eternal idea and how they fail to accomodate the needs of the modern Muslim society.

The thesis ends with chapter nine which contains proposals for further research areas related to strengthening the idea of the mosque presented in the thesis and some aspects of mosque planning strategies.

1.1 A Brief Overview of the Meaning, History and Functions of Mosques

1.1.1 The Meaning of the word 'Mosque'

Jairazbhoy explains that the English word 'mosque' is from the French 'mosque'e' which in turn is derived from the Spanish word

'mezquita'. The Spanish term is a translation of the Arabic word '*masdjid*' which originated from the Aramaic '*masgedha*'.¹ Gazalba explains that the root of the Arabic word '*masdjid*' is '*sajd*' which means 'to prostrate'.² The act of prostration is one of the ritual actions of the Muslim prayer. The word 'mosque', as understood in the present architectural terminology, is a building used by Muslims for the performance of prayer. However, it should also be noted that the word '*masdjid*' is also used generally in Arabic literature to refer to any place of worship in any religion.³

It is important at this juncture to distinguish several types of the Muslim place of worship in order to indicate specifically which type of mosque we are mainly concerned with. After more than fourteen hundred years the mosque has developed into numerous kinds that can be classified into five general types; the Sacred Mosques, the community mosque, the *madrassa*, the *muṣallā* and the memorial mosque.

The Sacred Mosques are the Al-Masdjid Al-Ḥarām in Makka, the Mosque of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in Madīna and the Al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem. These three mosques are clearly mentioned as holy places in the Qur'ān and in the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁴ There are several reasons for their special sanctity. Firstly, these are the places of pilgrimage of all

¹ R.A. Jairazbhoy, An Outline Of Islamic Architecture (London: Asia Publishing House, 1972), p.5

² Sidi Gazalba Masjid: Pusat Ibadat Dan Kebudayaan Islam, 3rd Edition, (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1975), p.108

³ See The Encyclopedia of Islam edited by C.E. Bosworth, E.van Donzel, B.Lewis and Ch. Pellat, Volume VI, (Leiden E.J. Brill 1991) p.644

⁴ See the Qur'ānic Verses 144 and 149 of Surā 2 on the Masdjid Al-Ḥarām and Verse 1 of Surā 17 in Abdullah Yusof Ali's The Holy Quran: Translation and Commentary (Virginia: Amma Corp., 1983)

'We see the turning, Of thy face, To the Heavens now, Shall We turn thee, To a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then, thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque, Wherever ye are turn your faces in that direction.' Surā 2 Verse 144

For the *ḥadīth*, see Abdul Hamid Siddiqi's translation of the Sahih Muslim (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1978), Vol. 2, p. 699, *ḥadīth* no. 3218

'Abū Huraira reported it directly from Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) that he said: Do not undertake journey but to three mosques; this mosque of mine, the Mosque of Al-Ḥarām and the Mosque of Aqṣā.'

Muslims. Furthermore, prayers in these mosques carry a different reward in merits.⁵ They also contain specific objects held sacred by Muslims. The Al-Masjdjid Al-Ḥarām contains the Ka'ba (Figure 1), which is a cubic structure believed by Muslims to have been initially constructed by the Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) as the first house of worship of Allāh (The Most High).⁶ The Al-Aḫṣā Mosque complex (Figure 2) comprises of an octagonal building known as the Dome of the Rock which houses a huge rock outcropping believed by Muslims to be the place of the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) Miraculous Journey and Ascent to heaven and where he performed the prayer as the *imām* or prayer leader with the past prophets of Islam (peace be upon them).⁷ It is also believed to be the place where the Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) was commanded to sacrifice his son. The Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) Mosque (Figure 3) in Madīna presently contains his grave and that of his closest Companions, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. These objects, although held sacred by Muslims, are not worshipped in the usual sense of a sacred icon.

The community mosque is the type known usually as the *djāmi'* and the *masjdjid*. These are the most common mosques for they are the ones used most extensively in the Muslim world. The *djāmi'* mosque is distinguished from the *masjdjid* as the one certified by

⁵ Ibid., See Abdul Hamid Siddiqui's translation of Sahih Muslim, Vol. 2, page 697, *ḥadīth* no. 3209

'Abū Huraira narrated it directly from Allah's Apostle(peace be upon him) having said this: A prayer in my mosque is a thousand times more excellent than a prayer in any other mosque, except Masjid al-Ḥarām.'

⁶ The account given in the Qur'ān in Surā 2, Verses 125 and 127 as follows:

'Remember We made the House, A place of assembly for man, And a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place for prayer; and We covenanted, With Abraham and Ismail, That they should sanctify My House for those who compass it around or use it, As a retreat or bow or prostrate themselves

'And remember Abraham and Ismail raised the foundation of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept this service from us. For thou art the All Hearing, The All Knowing" '.

Abdullah Yusof Ali., *The Holy Quran: Translation and Meaning* '

⁷ Please refer to Appendix I for an account of the Prophet's Journey and Ascension

Muslim governments for the Friday Prayers. In fact the Friday Prayers can be performed in any mosque that has a settled Muslim community. The distinction is partly for administrative convenience and can also be inferred as being politically inclined as this is one of the ways Muslim governments control the masses. This type of mosque is also used for a variety of purposes other than that of prayer such as places of education, shelter for the homeless, accomodation for the travellers and administrative centres.

The *muṣallā* is a type of mosque that is used only for prayers. The term itself is derived from the Arabic word *ṣalāt* which is the Muslim ritual prayer. It usually refers to a building or a place for the convenience of Muslims outside of their residential areas to perform the daily congregational prayer. In the modern urban lifestyle in many Muslim countries, the *muṣallā* is a room which is part of a building such as an office or shopping complex and its sole purpose is specifically meant for the performance of prayer. In Malaysia the *muṣallā* is known as the '*surau*' (Figure 4) which ranges from a temporary room in a building to a single building in a small community that has not been granted permission by the government to perform the Friday Prayers.

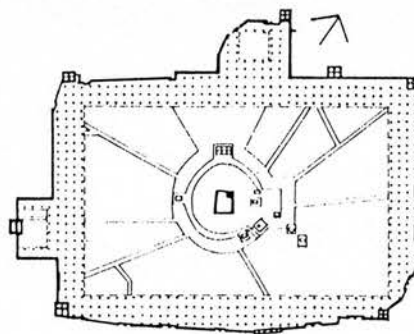
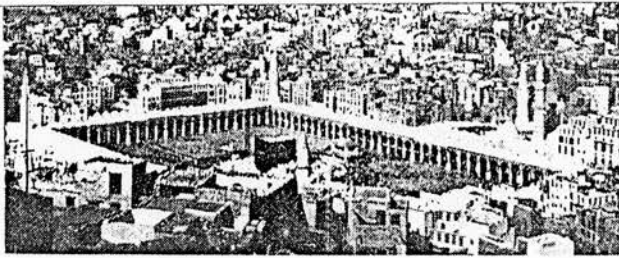


Figure 1 - The Masjid al-Haram in Makka. The mosque contains the Ka'ba. The structure surrounding the Ka'ba was built after the Prophet's demise.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.209

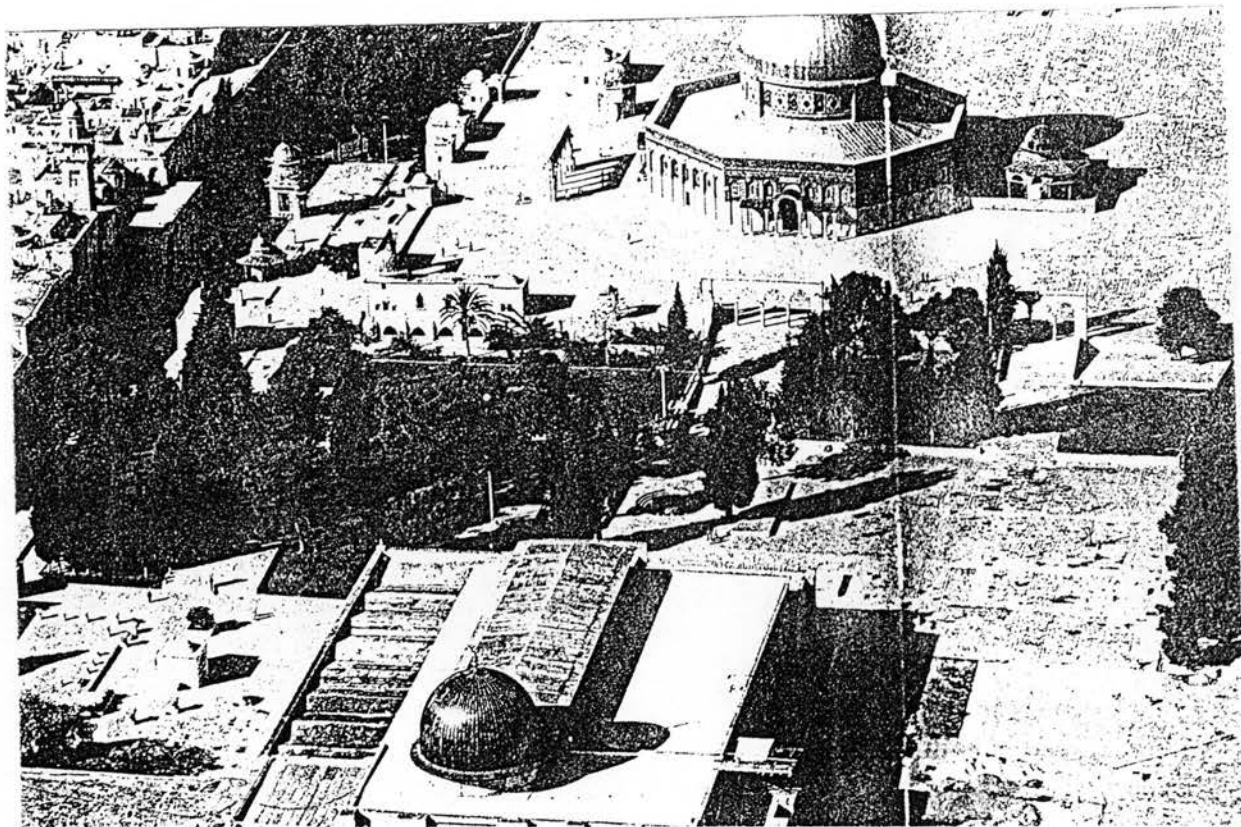


Figure 2 - The Masjid-al-Aksā complex. It literally means the 'farthest mosque' which the Qur'ān may have been referring to the ancient Temple of Solomon. The present complex, which comprises of a mosque and the Dome of the Rock as a holy shrine where the Prophet was thought to have begun his miraculous Ascension, was built long after the Prophet's death.

Ismail Serageldin (ed.), Space For Freedom (London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989) pp.120-121

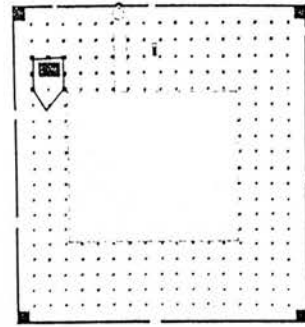
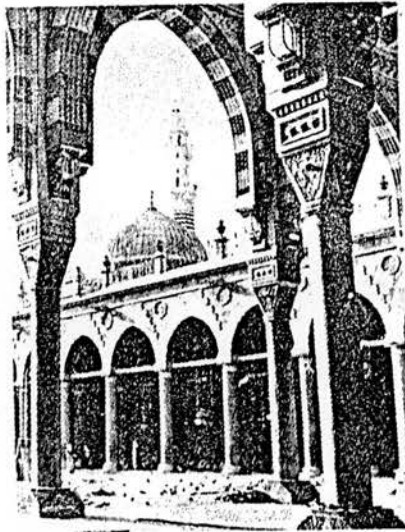


Figure 3 - The Prophet's Mosque in Madina. The mosque contains his grave and that of two of his Companions buried originally in one of his wives apartment adjacent to the original mosque structure. The Prophet had clearly forbidden the building of tombs and was even more specific about the construction of houses of worship over a grave. One of the important reasons for the construction of his tomb by the Muslims after his death may have been to protect his grave from being desecrated by the enemies of Islam.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.210

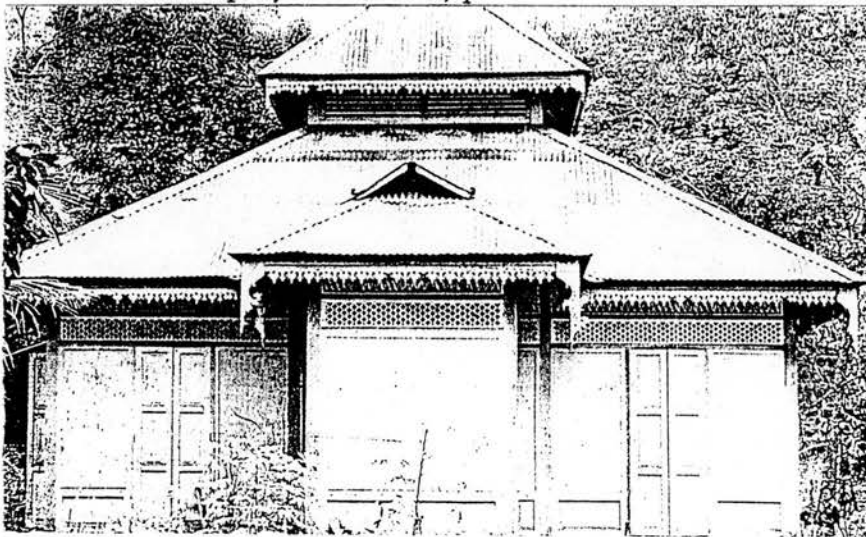


Figure 4 - A typical village *surau* in the Malay culture. It essentially comprises of a single space for the Muslim community's various activities. Muda Yusof comments that in the Malaysian culture the *surau* is more active than the *djāmi'* mosque since it is less 'sacred' and more intimate in scale.

N.A. Halim, 'Surau dan Madrasah: Pusat Ibadah dan Percambahan Ilmu' Dewan Budaya (September, 1990) p.43

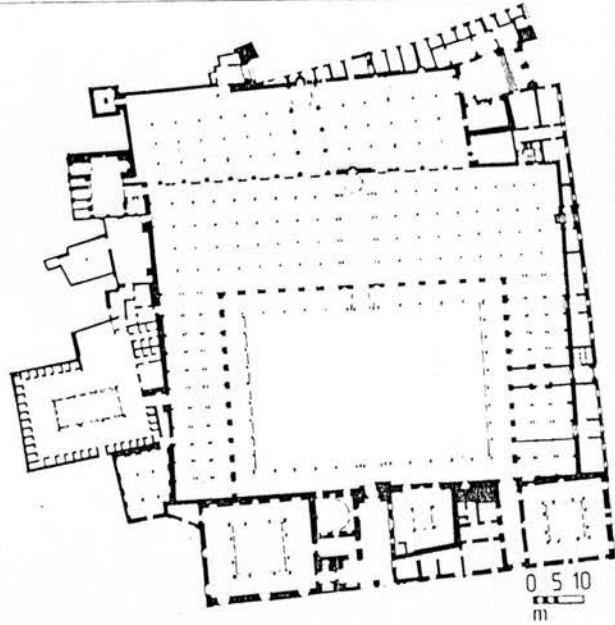
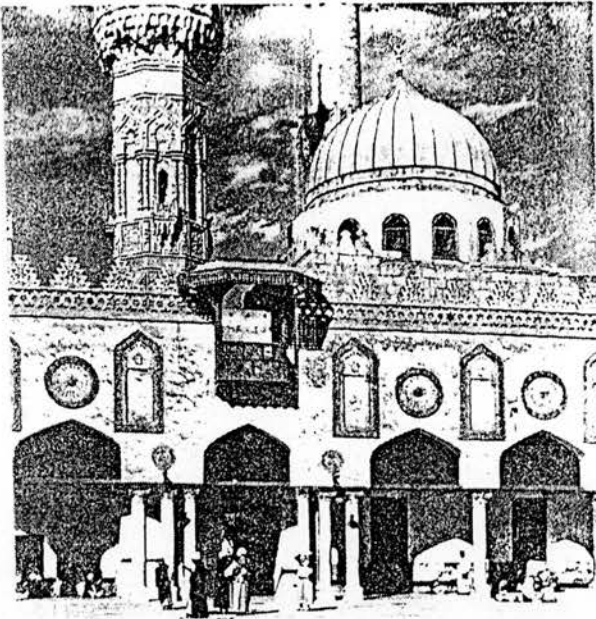


Figure 5 - The famous Al-Azhar Madrasa Mosque Complex in Cairo.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.223-224

The *madrasa* mosque (Figure 5) has been built for a purely educational purpose. In the past, they were established by eminent scholars in teaching the *Qur'ān*, the *ḥadīth* and Islamic law. In a later period they were established by personal endowments and the state. These mosques function in a similar manner to the community mosque with the exception that they contain facilities for the accommodation of students and teachers and function as a regular educational institution. Some of these mosques have been called 'monastic mosques' where *Ṣūfī* teachers had established communities of students and followers in isolation from the general Muslim settlement.

The memorial mosque is the type which is established by Muslims after the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to honour a historical incident such as the Badr or Uḥud Battle, his

birth place and where he had met the 'unseen beings' or to honour a dead caliph, saint or scholar. These mosques exist only in particular places connected to an incident or a person. Muslims of the Shī'a sect and those who follow the Ṣūfī path perform pilgrimages and pray at these mosques.

The main concern of the thesis is the development of the community mosque. The research attempts to clarify the purpose of this type of mosque for the use of Sunnī Muslims in the present social and political context.

1.1.2 A Brief History of the Development of the Mosque

Before the Revelation of the Ḳur'ān to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) had commenced in the year 610 of the Common Era, the mosque referred to in Arabic literature would indicate any of their temples and includes specifically the Ka'ba. When the Prophet began preaching Islam he had met secretly at houses and in the desert to teach Islam and pray together in the early form of Muslim prayer.⁸ The Prophet had migrated to Madīna in the year 622 and had

⁸ Accounts of these places can be found in Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah as follows:

'When the apostle's companions prayed, they went to the glens so that their people could not see them praying, and while Sa'd b. Abū Waqqāṣ was with a number of the Prophet's companions in one of the glens of Mecca, a band of polytheists came upon them while they were praying and rudely interrupted them'.

The Sīra records that the Prophet's enemies (two of them were Abū Sufyān, who embraced Islam after the liberation of Makka almost two decades later, and Abū Jahl who was later killed by the Muslims in the Battle of Badr) came to his house to listen to his prayers during the early days of Islam in Makka: "Muhammad b. Muslim b. Shibāb al-Zuhri told me that he was told that Abū Sufyan b. Harb and Abū Jahl b. Hishām and al-Akhnas b. Sharīq b. 'Amr b. Wahb al-Thaqafī, an ally of Bani Zuhra, had gone out by night to listen to the apostle as he was praying in his house. Everyone of them chose a place to sit where he could listen, and none knew where his fellow was sitting'.

The following account was during the conversion of 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb, the second Caliph of Islam who was one of the fiercest enemies of Islam: 'Umar said, "Lead me to Muhammad so that I may accept Islam". Khabbāb replied that he was at the house at al-Ṣafā with a number of his companions'.

A. Guillaume, The Life Of Muhammad: A Translation Of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah (London; Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 118, 142 and 157

established a prayer place at Qubā'.⁹ Although this is considered as the first mosque of Islam, it is the mosque of the Prophet in Madīna which was to become the most renowned mosque in the history of Islam.

The mosque of the Prophet at Madīna (Figure 6) had served many different functions.¹⁰ It was where he built his residence which comprised of several rooms aligned in a single row for his wives. The mosque was used as the meeting place for the Muslims and for the congregational prayers. The mosque was also used as an education centre, a courthouse, a military camp, a hospital, a shelter for the homeless and a place of celebration. Jews and Christians frequent the mosque in their dealings and debates with the Prophet. The mosque then was truly the centre of the Muslim life.

There were also other mosques set up during the time of the Prophet. His traditions record invitations by tribes to their camps to pray at a certain place or building which would become the tribal mosque. It should be noted that the Prophet had not insisted on any act of 'consecrating' a building or ground for the establishment of a mosque but the Muslims were the ones who had insisted his visiting and praying at their mosques. These mosques were established mostly because the tribes found it inconvenient to travel great distances and during adverse weather conditions.¹¹

⁹ The account is given in Chapter Four of this thesis on the Prophet's Hijra or migration to Madīna: 'The apostle stayed in Quba among B. 'Amr b. 'Auf from Monday to Thursday and then he laid the foundation of his mosque'.

¹⁰ For a detail discussion of all these functions please refer to Chapter Four of this thesis.

¹¹ An example of a *ḥadīth* relating to this aspect of the mosque is as follows:

Maḥmūd b. al-Rabī' reported that 'Itbān b. Mālik, who was one of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) and who participated in the Battle of Badr and was among the Anṣār (of Medina) told that he came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said: Messenger of Allah, I have lost my eyesight and I lead my people in prayer. When there is a downpour there is then a current of water in the valley that stands between me and them and I find it impossible to go to their mosque and lead them in prayer. Messenger of Allah, I earnestly beg of you that you should come and observe prayer at a place of worship (in my house) so that I should then use it as a place of worship. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Well, If God so wills, I would soon do so. 'Itbān said: On the following day, when the day dawned, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came along with Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked permission to get into the house. I gave him the permission, and he did not sit after entering the house, when he said: At what place in the house you desire me to say prayer? I ('Itbān) said: I pointed to a corner in the house. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stood at the place for prayer and pronounced Allah-o-Akbar (Allah Is Greatest). We stood behind him and he said two rak'ahs and then pronounced salutations (marking the end of prayer). We detained him for the meat curry we had prepared for him. The people of the neighbouring houses came and thus there was a good gathering in our house.

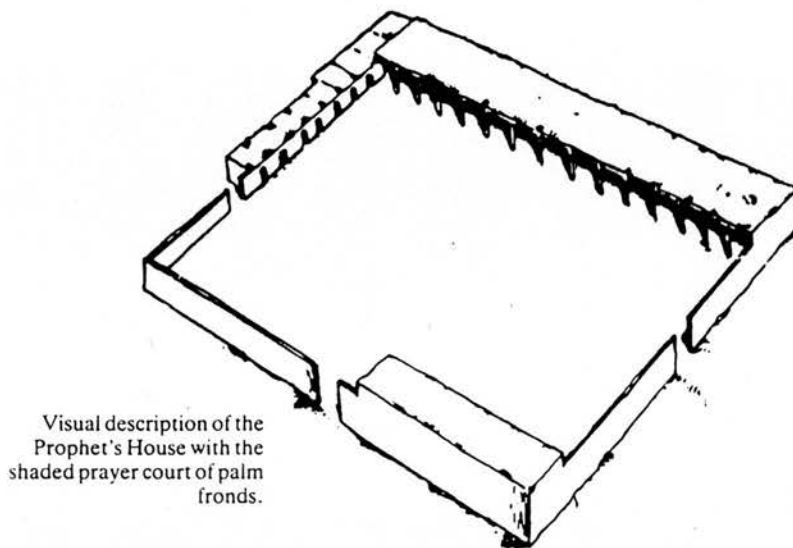


Figure 6 - The Prophet's Mosque in Madina (622 C.E). It had nine small apartments on one side for his wives and three entrances into the courtyard grounds. There were two covered parts of which the smaller one was used by the *ahl-suffā* or his Companions who were either homeless or those who had come to learn Islam directly from him. There is no evidence that the larger covered portion being used exclusively as a prayer space or that it was considered as a kind of 'sanctuary'. The various religious and secular activities had occurred both in the courtyard and in the covered portion.

Albeena (April/May, 1987) No.34, Vol.6, p.18

After the death of the Prophet, the first four caliphs who were his closest companions had continued to use the mosque as he had done during his lifetime. During the time after his demise Islam had expanded greatly to other territories outside the realm of Arabia. Military camps were established at Kūfa, Fuṣṭāṭ and Baṣra. The first act of the generals was to establish a mosque huge enough to contain the army (Figure 7). The generals had houses for themselves built adjacent

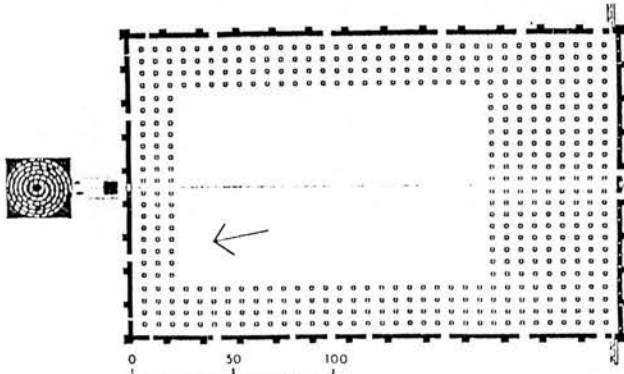
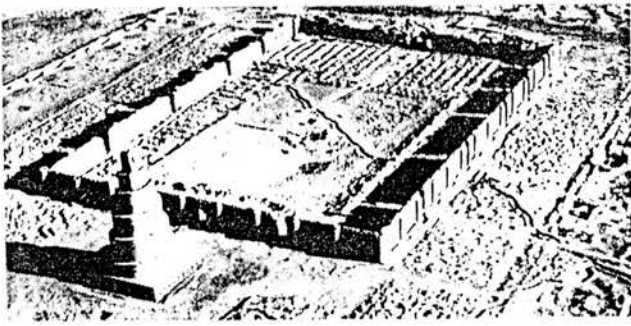


Figure 7 - The Great Mosque of Samarra in Iraq.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.250



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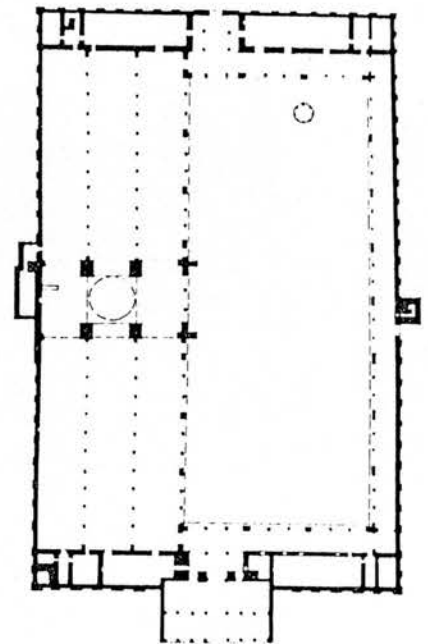


Figure 8 - The Great Mosque of Damascus

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.232

to the mosque and created spaces for the storage of arms and the treasury. Almost everything concerning the community was done in the mosque from administrative affairs to the Friday Prayers. In the old towns conquered by the Muslims such as Damascus (Figure 8) and Jerusalem, churches, palaces and temples were converted into mosques for the use of the caliph and the Muslims. In every Muslim city, at that early time, there was a single huge mosque for all the Muslims used as a gathering place for the caliph to address the people and for daily business and administrative activities. These single monuments were the undisputed political centres of Islam and specifically of the ruling personage. New caliphs and governors of provinces had to be sworn in at the mosque where the practice of officially offering fealty or *bay'a* by the people to the leaders was strongly adhered to with precedence from the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the first four caliphs. During this time there were a great number of small tribal mosques in existence and the caliphs or governors were extremely cautious in following the activities of these mosques for fear of a revolution.¹²

Sunnī historians have classified the period between the death of the Prophet and the death of the fourth caliph as the period of the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs'. This was because they were the *Ṣaḥābah* or the Companions of the Prophet who lived during his lifetime and of whom he was most pleased with. They were also given the promise of paradise during their lifetime by the Prophet. They were models of *mu'mins* or pious Muslims and their sayings and actions are held in reverence after the Sunna or traditions of the Prophet. It was during their time that mosques were simple and humble in architectural expression but were utilised to its fullest potential within the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

The Umayyad reigned for a century after the end of the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The reign of the Umayyad saw the mosque becoming more isolated and specialised in purpose. The ruler had separated his living quarters from the mosque and had established private dwellings in the form of palaces and retreats. It was also during this period that the *madrasa* mosque came into being. At this time the

¹² See Chapter Two on Creswell's account of the incident.

majority of Muslims had lost faith in the caliphs as guardians of the true way of Islam and had convened in great numbers at the residences of the Muslim scholars who were perceived as the keepers of the traditions of the Sunna. It was also at this time that the Shī'a sectarian movement began to be mobilised by the family members related to the Prophet who were later to establish the 'Abbāsid caliphate. This sectarian mosque would proliferate in number only during the reign of the 'Abbāsid but their foundation was secretly established in the Umayyad period. The Ṣūfī masters who believed in removing the worldly ties in religious life had established mosques for their communities. Amidst all these developments in mosques, the big city mosque still held unswerving hold over the political affairs of the empire and was very much the centre of Muslim life. These great mosques retained their roles as the administrative centre, the financial centre, the courthouse, the place of official state audience, the place for religious celebrations and the centre of learning.

Further development and specialisation of mosques had occurred during the 'Abbāsid period. Most of these developments in mosque types were the direct result of the 'Abbāsid concept of Islam and the caliphate. According to most Sunnī historians, the 'Abbāsid had engineered a revolution against the Umayyad by mostly inciting the Muslims against the overindulgence of the Umayyad caliphs and the use of Ḥusayn's death at Karbalā'.¹³ The 'Abbāsid leaders had openly supported the claims of the Shī'a and cried for a revolution to reinstate the family of 'Alī as the rightful caliph. However this was merely a political strategy and when the people had removed the last of the Umayyad caliph, the 'Abbāsid had placed one of their own as the caliph. The 'Abbāsid and the Shī'a Muslims were the first to venerate their dead leaders who were from the family of 'Alī. This veneration was in excess of the practice of Islam where the Prophet had strictly forbidden against lamenting and showing excessive emotion for the dead.¹⁴ The Shī'a Muslims had rejected the traditions of the Prophet claiming that they were purposely circulated among the Companions who were against 'Alī

¹³ Account taken from S. Mahmudnasir, *Islam: Concept and History*. (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1981)

¹⁴ See Chapter Four on the subject of the funeral rituals.

in the selection of the caliphs. Furthermore they viewed the compilation of *ḥadīth* as an act of supporting the Umayyad status quo and thus had evolved their own compilation of *ḥadīths*. The cult of venerating the dead resulted in the proliferation of numerous tomb mosques and mausoleums of the Shī'ī leaders and saints. The 'Abbāsīd caliphs were also the first to order the building of their tombs in mosques and close to the saints in the hope of being in the shade of these 'friends of Allāh' in the World of the Dead or Barzakh and during the Day of Judgment.¹⁵ The 'Abbāsīd were also the first to establish the great palace with the great mosque adjacent to it as the symbol of central authority in Muslim cities.¹⁶ The architectural message clearly established that the mosque had no longer symbolised the power and strength of Islam but that Islam was in total submission to the caliphate. The 'Abbāsīd period also saw the removal of the caliphs from the office of the *imām* where he no longer represented the unity of Islam in spiritual and worldly matters.¹⁷ The post of *imāms* was established and financed by the machinery of the caliph. Aside from the small private mosques of scholars and Ṣūfī saints, these monumental mosques were little more than the propaganda machines of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate. It was also at this time that the mosque no longer functioned as the courthouse of the Muslims and was replaced by the Dār-al-Ḥakam.¹⁸ Thus, with the presence of the palace and governor's residence as the administrative and political centres, the *madrasas* as educational institutions and the presence of special courthouses to administer the laws, the mosque was stripped of all these roles and had become the place of *ṣalāt* or ritual prayer, the place of *i'tikāf* or seclusion and the place of public announcement. Its most important purpose had seemed to be the symbol of the domination of Islam over other cultures in the conquered territories.

The modern era saw the world of Islam crumble before the eyes of millions of Muslims throughout the world. Under the influence of foreign powers in the West and self interested Muslim leaders, the

¹⁵ See James Dickie, 'Allah And Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas And Tombs', an article from the book *Architecture Of The Islamic World* edited by George Michell, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978), p. 43

¹⁶ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 668

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 674

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, page 671

Muslim world was divided into independent nations who now look towards the West for a new model of life. Islam as a way of life became a mere practice of culture apparent only in certain dress codes and the acts of prayer, fasting and the performance of *hadj*. The mosque had become an institution that was under a specific department of religious affairs in many nations. These departments finance the mosques and paid salaries to *imāms* and provide enough facilities for the Muslim to carry out their basic Islamic rituals of prayer and the learning of the fundamental rituals of Islam. Although there existed many mosques in villages and cities it can be seen that their importance no longer held priority over the Muslim's affairs in life. The great city mosques are presently built more to stress the identity of a heritage rather than with the thought of creating a facility that would help the Muslims to fully realise the Islamic way of life. Although the mosques 'have died' in their roles as the centre of the Muslim life throughout the world of Islam, its potential as the mechanism to move the Muslims in masses can be seen in the Iranian revolution and the confrontation between the Egyptian governments and the Islamic movements. It was shown in a recent study that the network of mosques at the level of the common people in Iran had helped propagate Imām Khomeni's political philosophy which brought down the Shah of Iran who was backed by Western powers.¹⁹ At the present time, in comparison to Sunnī mosques, Shī'a mosques are being used to their fullest potential as centres of Muslim life and housing a great number of different functions such as army conscriptions, military training, marriage ceremonies, polling stations, interest free banking facilities, travelers accommodation and cultural performances.²⁰ It is important at this point in history for the Sunnī world to examine their definition of the purpose of mosques which could help in the cause of reviving the Islamic way of life to all Muslims and in the propagation of Islam.

¹⁹ C.A. Vakili-zad The Sociology Of The Shi'ite Mosque in Iran: The Cultural And Institutional Basis Of The Iranian Revolution Of 1978-79, an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation from Boston College, 1987

²⁰ -----, 'Iranians reactivates mosques to become centres for various activities', Islamic Herald, 6(3 &4), pp. 17-19

1.1.3 Present Purpose and Functions of the Mosque

This section of the chapter contains a general description of the main activities and events of the mosque that occur in a single year. This description is based mainly on our experience in Malaysia, Singapore, the U.K. and the U.S.. It is also based on literature sources of mosque committee reports from the Menara magazine in Malaysia.²¹ The activities and events outlined in this section are basically what present lay Muslims understand as the purpose of the mosque in their community.

The main activity of the mosque is the performance of congregational prayers. The mosque also acts as an important education centre for the formal teaching of religious education. It also serves as the administration centre for the mosque officials and caters for Muslim religious celebrations.

The most important function of the mosque is as a place of prayer. According to Muslim jurists, the five daily prayers must be established by at least two members of the community to absolve the rest of the Muslims in that community from the sin of not performing the congregational prayer.²² On Fridays Muslims gather at the mosque for the Friday congregational prayer that occur as a substitute to the mid-afternoon prayer. The Muslims listen to a short sermon and perform the prayer immediately after that. The Friday Prayers and the five daily prayers are the fixed daily and weekly activities in the mosque. Another type of congregational prayer occurs during the month of Ramadhān

²¹ From the Menara magazine are the following reports on mosque activities:

'Masjid Padang Balang Batu 4, Jalan Gombak, Kuala Lumpur', no. (1), (September 1975), pp. 10-11

'10 Tahun Masjid Negara', no. 2, (1976), pp. 10-14

'Masjid Al-Rahman Jalan Pantai Baru, Kuala Lumpur', no. 10 (1979), pp. 3-4

'Masjid Al-Hidayah Sentul Pasa, Kuala Lumpur', no. 11 (1979), pp. 3-5

'Masjid Al-Akram Datuk Keramat, Kuala Lumpur', no. 7 (1978), pp. 26-30

'Masjid Jamek Bandar, Kuala Lumpur', no. 5 (1978), pp. 26-32

'Masjid Jame' Kampung Baru Kuala Lumpur', no. 3 (1977), pp. 15-20

²² The religious ruling concerning the obligatory daily prayers is classified as a 'Fard Kifayah'. In Islam there are specific obligatory duties that an individual must perform such as fasting and contributing the *zakāt*. There are also those duties that if some Muslims perform, the whole community is absolved from the sin of not performing it or performing it individually. There are many such duties such as the funeral prayer and the washing of the dead, the daily prayers and enjoining the good and forbidding evil. However to ensure that the community is safe from the being in sin concerning those duties, all the individual Muslims are encouraged greatly to learn and perform these duties.

when Muslims fast in the day time for twenty nine or thirty days. The Tarāwīh is a non-obligatory prayer but Muslims are recommended to perform it mainly in congregation.²³ This prayer is performed each night of the Ramadhān until the last night on the eve of the 'Id celebration. In the morning of the 'Id after Ramadhān Muslims gather again to perform the non-obligatory congregational 'Id Prayer which consists also of the delivery of a short sermon. A similar 'Id prayer occurs also during the Haḍj celebration. Thus, the mosque's programme is fixed daily by the five obligatory prayers, weekly by the Friday Prayers and annually by the Tarāwīh and the two 'Id Prayers.

Besides these fixed prayers there are also occasional prayers that may be performed according to special circumstances. The Eclipse Prayer is performed whenever there is a lunar or solar eclipse. The Hājat Prayer is performed as a special request by the community to ask Allāh the Most High for rain or to avoid a calamity. Funeral prayers are sometimes performed at the mosque when requested by the deceased's family and if the space in the deceased's home is inadequate to accommodate the congregation.

The next important function of the mosque is as the centre for religious education. Muslim children are usually sent to the mosque for a period of one or two hours for a certain number of days to learn to recite the Ḳur'ān and practice the ablution and prayer rituals. The education of adults usually takes the form of formal lectures delivered in the mosque.

The mosque is also the place where celebrations to commemorate important events in Islam are held. The 'Id celebrations are held in mosques. It seems that some mosques particularly in the U.K. and the U.S. celebrate the two 'Ids throughout the day with entertainment activities and feasts at the mosque. Muslims from South East Asia and the Middle East merely provide a short feast at the mosque and celebrate these occasions by visiting relatives and friends. The latter situation of 'Id celebration is not the practice of the Prophet but an innovation allowed and supported by the jurists of each country. Some Sunnī Muslims such as those in Malaysia and Singapore celebrate the event of the Hidjra or Migration of the Prophet to Madīna, the *Isrā'* and

²³ Please refer to Appendix II for a detail explanation of this prayer.

Mi'rāj or the Ascent and Journey of the Prophet and also the *mawlid* or celebration of the Prophet's birthday. It should be noted that the Prophet had never ordered or even implied that these events in honour of himself were to be celebrated and the *Ṣaḥābah* had not done so. These are innovations that are held by certain Muslims, for instance in Saudi Arabia, as serious transgressions of the Sunna.

The above events and rituals represent the main activities in the mosque. For these purposes, the mosque is usually equipped with several types of spaces. The main space is obviously for the prayer ritual. The space is also used for the delivery of religious lectures and sometimes for feasts during the time of breaking the fast in *Ramadhān* and during certain occasions. Some mosques in the tropical countries possess a verandah space which is similar to a covered porch surrounding the main prayer space. This space is meant as to cater for an overflow of worshippers during congregational prayers and as a place for eating and leisure so as not to 'defile' the sanctity of the prayer space. Attached to the main prayer space are those for ablution, toilet, kitchen, storage and for the children's religious education. The exterior spaces are mainly for parking and mostly landscaped as gardens. Mosques are usually constructed in the present time as free standing monuments whether they are in the urban or village contexts. This is mainly because their grounds are held as sacred by Muslims and also to emphasise the mosque's symbolic importance. Sometimes they are located at the edges of the cities as they fail to compete with other commercial buildings for prime sites in the centre of the city. Some mosques are built purposely on a hill and in the least busy part of the cities so as to provide a more contemplative and serene atmosphere surrounding them.

1.2 The Crisis in Mosque Architecture

The mosque faces a situation that has been appropriately described as a 'crisis' in both its organisation and architecture. This is partly due to the failure of Muslim thinkers in the modern age to define the approach by which Islam can be adapted in the rapidly changing modern world. Muslims have been living in the present age according to the code of life determined by laws derived by jurists in the first few

centuries of Islam. The so called 'doors of *ijtihād*' were closed in the middle periods of the Islamic civilisation initially to avoid misuse of the *ijtihād* principle to support self interested parties and activities. Muslim intellectuals in the present age have demanded that this 'door' be reopened for Islam can no longer survive under the pretext of keeping the laws 'pure' from worldly 'filth'.

The problem of defining the function of the mosque is also closely related to the way of life which separates the activities of life into secular and religious aspects. This lifestyle is characteristic of the present Christian West where religion governs the spiritual aspects of those who profess a faith in it whilst secularisation reigns over the political, economic and social aspects of life. Muslims have embraced this 'new religion' partly because of the failure of the Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars to convince them that Islam can promise a more successful future in this world. In other cases, colonialism and political domination of Western powers over Muslim nations have drastically influenced the social and political structure of the Muslims and have impeded the development of resurgent Islamic thinking to reach their minds and hearts. Muslim leaders, who are mostly trained in the West have subscribed to the modern secular way of life. Muslim countries in the twentieth century are characterised mostly by ideologies secular in orientation, with Islam as an insignificant aspect of culture. Mosques are controlled by the state government or monarchs and *imāms* or prayer leaders are elected to educate the public on the ritual aspect of the religion while keeping matters pertaining to the running of the country outside the 'holy ground of the mosque'. Politics, say most Muslim leaders to the public, is inherently 'dirty' and hence should have no place within the sacred precinct of the mosque.²⁴

The issue of the role of the mosque in Muslim society originated in the final decades of the twentieth century. The world at the present time, is witnessing a revival of Islam as a total way of life. The resurgence of Islamic movements in these past decades has been brought about partly by the failure of the modern secular way of life and the idea of the separation between 'church and state' to provide answers to most social, political, educational and economic ills that are plaguing the

²⁴ M. Ismail Naim, 'Risalah Masjid Di Dalam Pembangunan Ummah', *Menara* (December, 1988), pp. 39-43.

Western world. In the light of this present crisis in the West, Muslim intellectuals have looked towards the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna* as the guiding light. Organisations such as the International Institute of Islamic Thought was set up to reinterpret the sources of Islam in their effort to islamise the present disciplines of knowledge such as politics, arts, science, philosophy, history, economy, anthropology and others. It is a huge undertaking and friction would sometime occur between the orthodox '*ulamā*' or religious scholars and the modern Muslim thinkers.²⁵ This friction is a healthy tension whereby it is hoped that each of the parties would compromise and that the modern Muslim thinker would take the utmost care in interpreting the sources and that the '*ulamā*' would literally come down to earth from their high pedestal and learn about the modern disciplines of knowledge which was partly brought about by the Western civilisation.

The problem of how the mosque can better serve Muslim societies is deeply entwined into the present efforts of the Islamic resurgent movements to establish Islam as the way of life for Muslims and to provide an alternative concept of life for the whole world to solve its problems. The mosque must now be viewed neither from the Western perspectives with different perceptions of culture and philosophy nor from the views of Muslims with Western ideologies that contradict the spirit of Islam but from the perspectives of the fundamental spirit and teachings of Islam.

The crisis in mosque architecture has resulted in the existence of two different views about what the mosque is and what its role should be. Proponents of the first view maintain the mosque as a symbolic sanctuary and as the most sacred place of ritual worship while those of the second view maintain the mosque as a centre for the development of the community. Both of these views and their architectural implications are discussed in the following two subsections.

²⁵ The friction between the modern Muslim thinkers and certain religious scholars are discussed in Chapter III of The International Institute of Islamic Thought's first book the Islamization Of Knowledge: General Principles And Work Plan (Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989). In brief, the institute has attacked orthodox scholars for defending the traditional methods of '*ijtihād*' or reasoning without the consideration of modern problems and methods of reasoning.

1.2.1 The Mosque as a House of God

The view of the mosque as a sanctuary, or 'a house of God' contains the suggestion that its main purposes are to symbolise the glory of Islam and to provide the place of ritual prayer and meditation. Any other function, such as public religious education, which is associated with the mosque is clearly considered as secondary to the two main purposes of the mosque. This view is held mostly by the patrons of mosques, architects and architectural historians. The views of the clients and architects are described in the following passages. The architectural historians' views are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter of this thesis.

The clients of the mosque can be individuals such as a caliph, monarch or president or a group such as the state, the department of religious affairs of a country or the mosque committee of a Muslim community. In countries with a predominantly Muslim population, the clients are often either the state government, the department of religious affairs or the ruling individual. Where Muslims exist in countries as a minority group it is usually a committee elected by the Muslims in a particular community.

The perception of the clients on mosques can be obtained from literature sources but more clearly in the manifestation of the buildings themselves. The clients' overriding concerns are usually about the identity of the mosque as a symbol of Islam's past glory and the artistic heritage of the particular country. The Shah Alam Mosque in Malaysia (Figure 9) epitomises the concern of symbolising the greatness and glory of Islam by its adoption of an Ottoman central dome type mosque with designs of interior and exterior landscaping evoking the sense of a grandiose palace. Hundreds of millions of Ringgits was spent to furnish the mosque in a most lavish attempt unprecedented in the Malaysian history of building. It seems that the ruling Monarch of the Selangor State had accepted the idea that the peak of Islamic architecture was reached during the splendour of the Ottoman period and, therefore, it seemed most appropriate that the mosque be built in this spirit. The tall slender minaret outreached the heights of the tallest skyscrapers in the country and the dome outspans that of St. Paul's Cathedral probably in a gesture to signify the overriding claims of Islam over material life and of other religions. A similar concept of grand scale and monumental

architecture can be detected by the proposed Baghdad National Mosque competition (Figure 10 and 11). The challenge was to build the biggest mosque in the world on the scale of the great Sāmarrā mosque which was one of the Muslim's military centres in the early days of Islam. The mosque represents also a search for the region's identity of the past splendour of the City of Baghdad.

Architects of present mosques are from both Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Muslim architects are trained either in the West or locally using an architectural curriculum derived solely from Western institutions. Evidences of the modernistic influence of the concept of religion and the house of worship can be seen in the designs and statements of these architects. The mosque is considered no different than either a church or a temple in relation to the design principles of a sacred edifice where the mosque is looked upon as a place of silent meditation and seclusion from the outer world. In the Rome Mosque (Figure 12), Paolo Portogesi has emphasised the importance of prayers and meditative seclusion in the interior spaces of the mosque and gardens which secure silence, privacy and allude to images of the Muslim paradise.²⁶ El-Gohary, in paying tribute to the mosques designed by El-Wakil, praises the designs for their meditative treatment through the use of traditional construction, pictorial representations, inner space and surrounding private garden.²⁷ These attitudes concerning mosques can be clearly summed up by the former President of the Malaysian Architectural Association in the Majalah Arkitek's special edition on mosques:

Consider what a mosque, temple or church is. It is a place where we try to elevate spiritually to meet with God. It is the place where He dwells, a place where we go to seek solace and to communicate with Him. It is a place where we feel most at ease and where His presence, peace and comfort are most felt. It is indeed our refuge.²⁸

²⁶ Portogesi and Giglioti, 'Post-Modern Mosque', Architecture Design (1980), Vol. 50, p.28

²⁷ Osamah El-Gohary, 'Regionalism and El-Wakil's Architecture', Al-Beena 34, Vol. 6, (April/May, 1987), p.11

²⁸ Jimmy Lim, 'Editorial Comments', Majallah Arkitek Vol. 2 no. 6, (Nov./Dec. 1990)

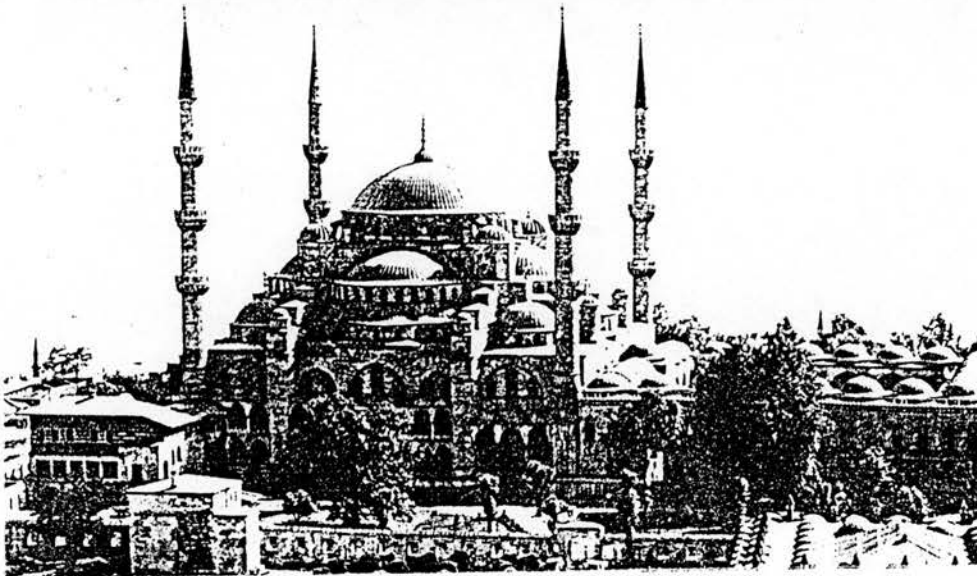
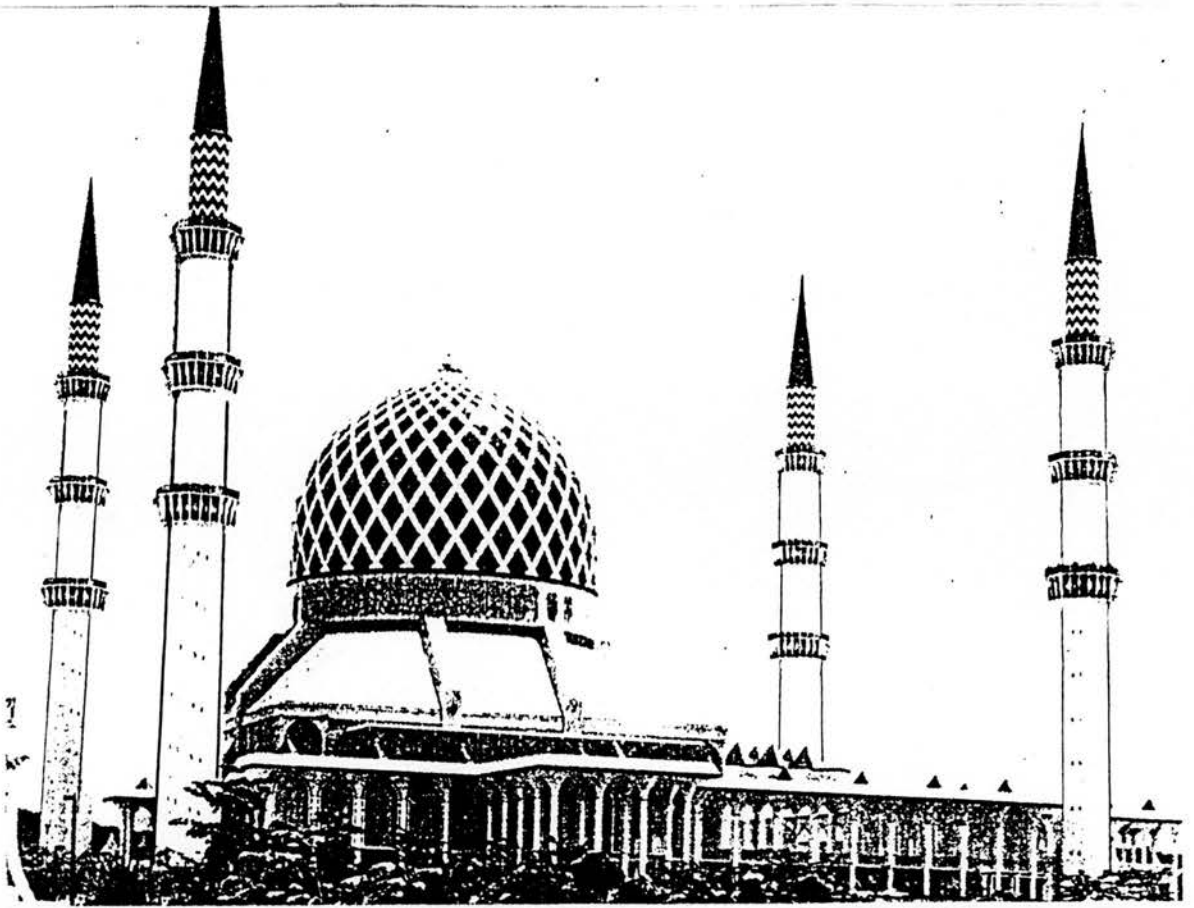


Figure 9 - The Shah Alam Mosque in Malaysia (above) and the Blue Mosque (below) in Turkey. The race is on among the Muslim countries to outdo one another in building the tallest minaret, the biggest dome and the largest mosque sparing no expense, ironically, to make the Prophet's prophecy that one of the signs of the Muslims' decline is their striving to build bigger and higher mosques without caring as to their functions and roles in the community. The design of the Shah Alam Mosque is undoubtedly based on the best examples of Ottoman architecture.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.18

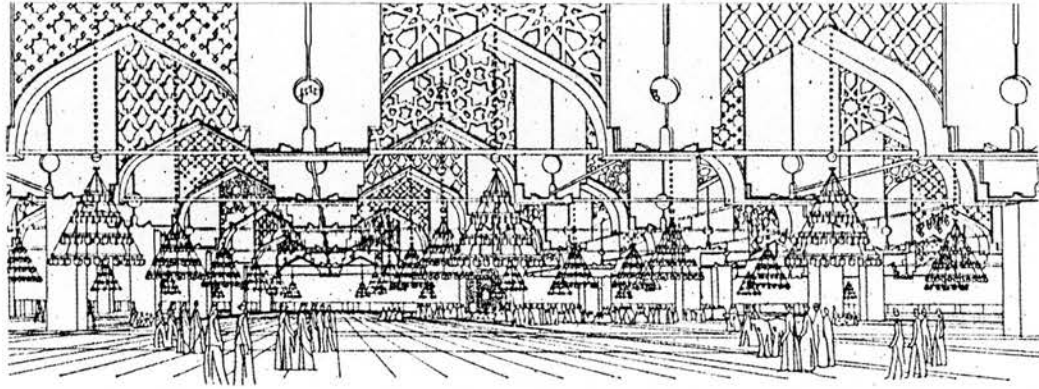
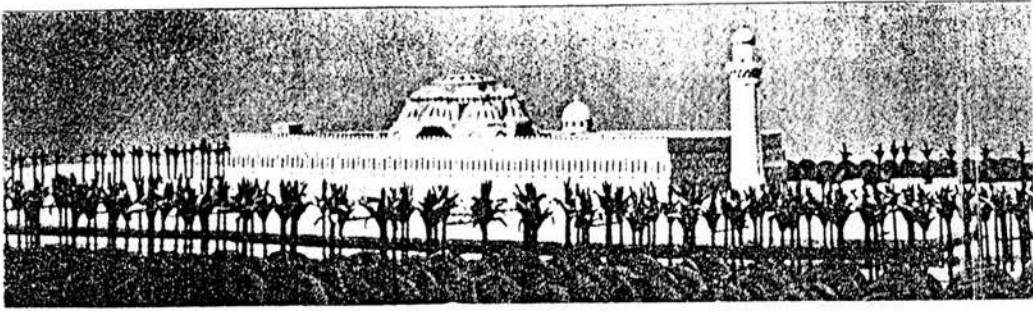


Figure 10 - Venturi's entry for the Baghdad Mosque Competition

Samir al-Khalil, The Monument: Art, Vulgarity and Responsibility in Iraq (London: Andre Deutsch, 1991) p.63

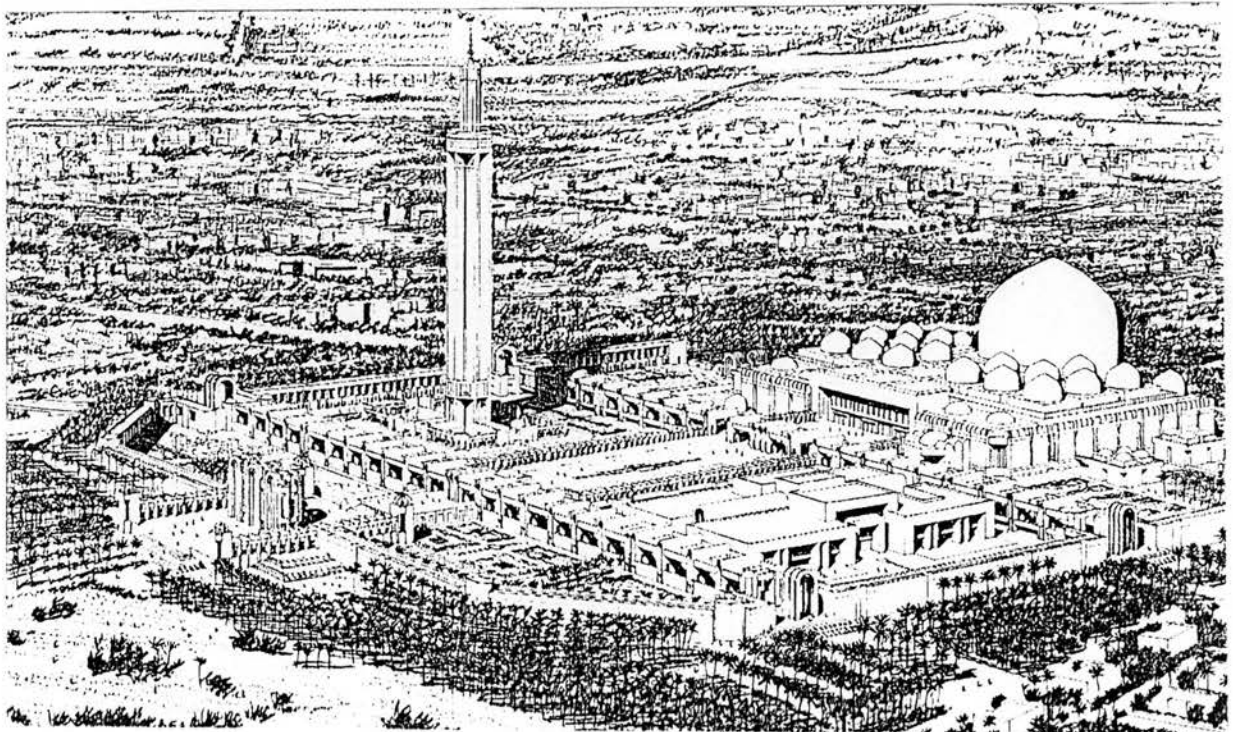


Figure 11 - A local architect's entry for the Baghdad Mosque Competition

Samir al-Khalil, The Monument: Art, Vulgarity and Responsibility in Iraq (London: Andre Deutsch, 1991) p.100

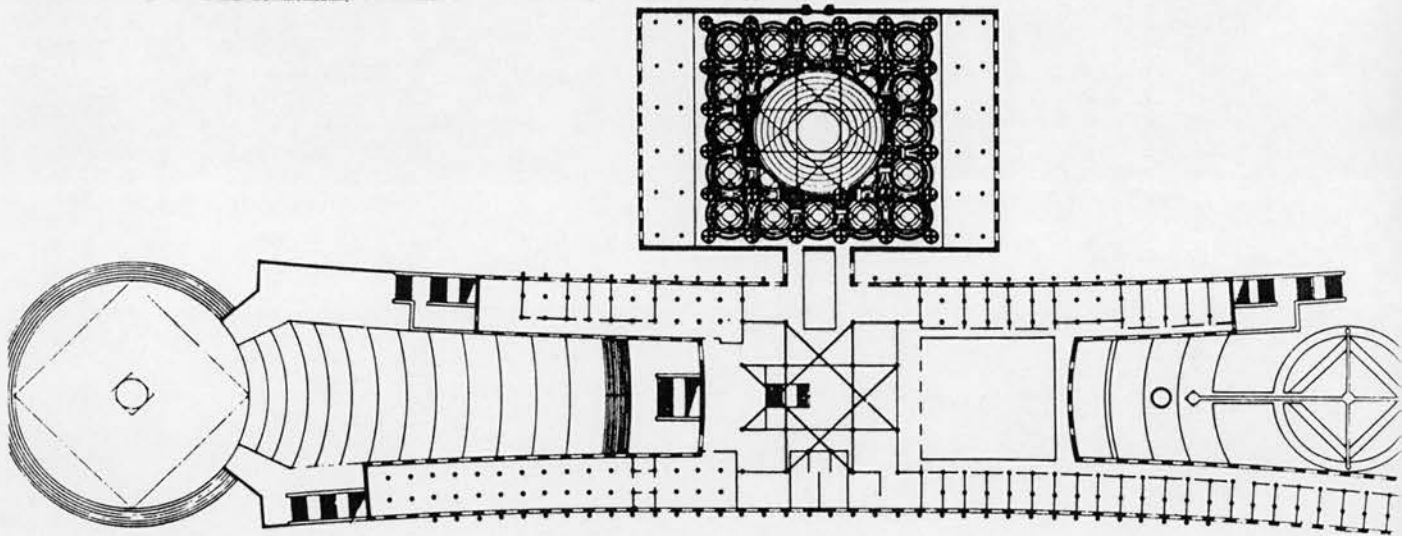
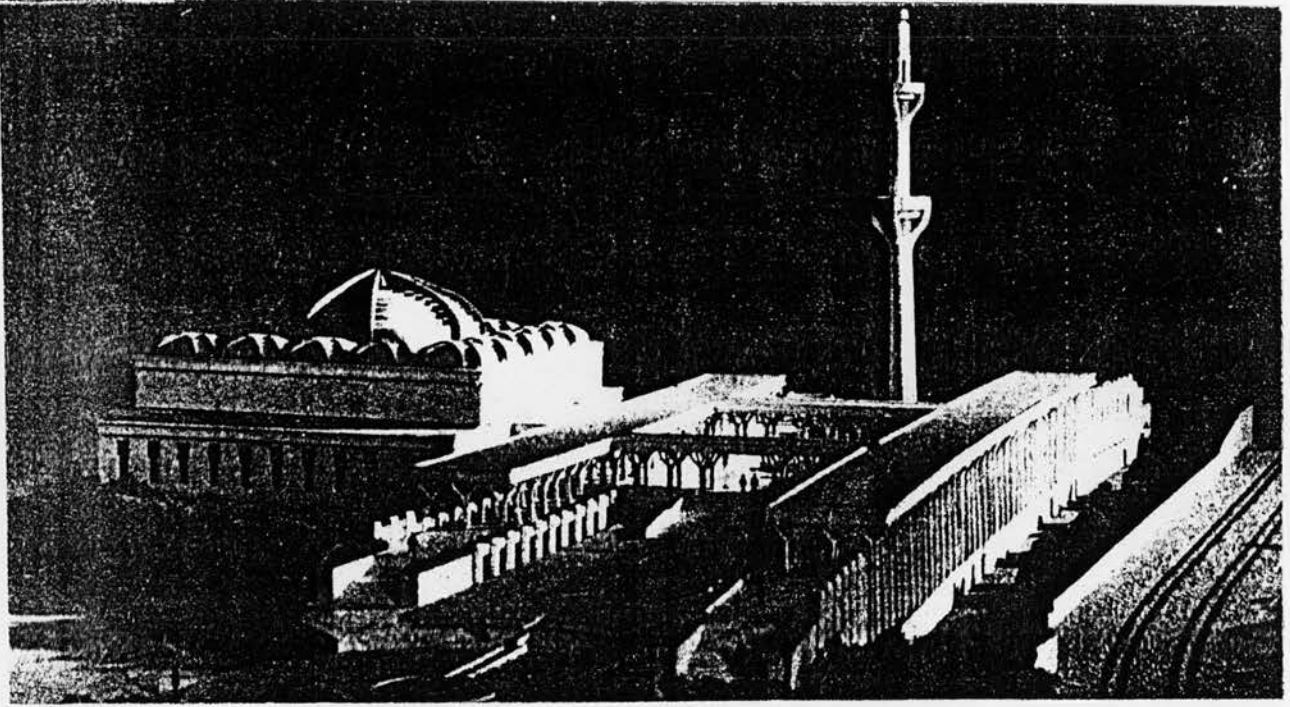


Figure 12 - The Rome Mosque by Porthogessi and Gigliotti

Porthogessi and Gigliotti, 'Post-Modern Mosque' Architecture Design (1980)
Vol.50, pp.28

The stereotype view of the mosque echoed by most architects is found in these statements where the mosque is grouped together with the church and the temple, considered as a house of God, a place of silent meditation and communion with God and a refuge from the outside world.

With this concept of the mosque the architects have spent most of their resources in creating designs to evoke the image of the

house of God of Islam. Exotic forms are derived from the eclectic revival or abstraction of past architectural elements. Examples of such designs can be found in Ihsan Fethi's essay 'Mosque Today'.²⁹ El-Wakil resorts to the concept of architectural revival of mosques in the period which comprised of the most pious scholars teaching in mosques of that time.³⁰

It can be clearly observed that the concern of architects with regard to mosque design seems to be to create the most evocative forms as symbols of Islam and as places most conducive to meditation, refuge and prayer.

There are several architectural implications inherent in the idea of the mosque as a house of God and as a house of worship. The first implication is that the mosque is a place for the communion between man and God. It is the sacred ground for the individual meeting between the Muslim and Allāh The Most High through such acts as prayer and meditation. The mosque is seen as the best place to perform the individual and congregational prayer. The main architectural objective of the mosque therefore is to provide an appropriate stage for the performance of prayer and meditation. It is for this reason that the prayer space becomes the most important space where the most expenditure is lavished. The second implication is that the mosque is the most important architectural symbol of past Islamic glory. Inherent in this idea is that the best method of building mosques is the one based on the past architectural monuments of Islam which are accepted as masterpieces of art work by architectural historians. In this tradition the mosque is seen as a great religious symbol similar to the great cathedrals and temples of the religions of the world. Thirdly, the views of the mosque as a place of ritual worship has also the implication that the mosque is a place of seclusion from the world where the individual may retreat in solace from the community to be closer to God. The mosque is seen as the best place for acts of individual piety such as the recitation of the *Qur'ān* and the performance of *dhikr* during the act of seclusion. Finally the view implies that through a process of specialisation, the

²⁹ Ihsan Fethi, 'The Mosque Today', an article in the book *Architecture And Continuity* edited by Sherban Cantacuzino, (New York: Aperture, 1985)

³⁰ M. Al-Asad, 'The Mosque Of Abdul Wahed El-Wakil', *Mimar* no. 42, (1992), pp. 34-39

mosque is the most appropriate place to perform the acts of ritual worship. Since many of its political, educational, judicial and social functions have evolved specific and separate characters and buildings, the final evolutionary stage of the mosque is naturally that of the performance of prayer.

The design of the best mosques seems to be associated with the design of a symbolic monument. The best mosques seem to be those which are monumental, possessing an exotic image, an imitation of a past 'renowned' mosque and are sited on island sites which are not integrated with the urban fabric. They are mainly placed at the highest place in the city for the purposes of an unobstructed view and a clear hierarchical skyline. The mosque grounds are filled with fountains and gardens with flowers depicting the Muslim paradise and designed for the soul seeking seclusion from the outer world. The great prayer space dwarfs any other space in the mosque where much wealth is spent to decorate its interior and the liturgical furnitures. The mosque is truly designed to be a symbol, to be a place of congregational prayer and a place of retreat to separate the individual from society.

1.2.2 The Mosque as a Centre for the Community

The second view of the mosque is that it is a kind of activity centre for the development of the Muslim community. The proponents of this view stresses the importance of reliving the multi-functional nature of the Prophet's Mosque during his lifetime. This view is generally held by Muslim scholars who are active in the propagation of Islam as a complete system of life rooted in the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and the *Ṣunnā*. This group believes that the mosque has a more important role than as a mere symbol. They feel that the mosque should be an education centre and the the place where unity and brotherhood of the *ummā* is inculcated. The views of some of the scholars are discussed in the following passages.

One of the few critics who has advocated a radically different approach to tackle the crisis of the mosque is Ismail Kamus.³¹ He is a writer and a former administrator of the Wilayah Persekutuan Department of Religious Affairs. He is one of the few critics who does

³¹ Ismail Kamus, 'Makmurkanlah Masjid Anda', *Menara*, (17) (March 1981), pp. 29-30

not emphasise the importance of the mosque as a prayer place. He suggests that the Prophet had not considered the necessity of a sacred edifice for prayer when he built the first mosque in Madīna since prayer can be performed anywhere on the surface of the earth. Ismail Kamus is of the opinion that the Prophet's mosque was built solely for the purpose of uniting the early Muslims in a single brotherhood. He, therefore, feels that mosques should be built for this main purpose. He criticised the building of mosques in the fashion of cathedrals or in the grand manner which do not take into account the aspects which would attract Muslims to fully utilise the mosque to foster unity and brotherhood. He emphasises that the Muslim life is not seclusion but requires complete social interaction for his personal salvation in the hereafter. It is in this respect that the mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the early days of Islam is to be seen. Ismail Kamus's view is supported by critics such as Suhaib Hasan and Akmal Haji M. Zain. Hasan makes an important point when he declares that there should not be any activity that would benefit only a single person in the mosque. He further maintains that the daily prayers where the Muslim meets five times a day is an important mechanism and catalyst for Muslims to strengthen their brotherhood and work closely together to develop the Muslim community.³² Zain adds that the mosque must be used as the single most important base for the Muslim to prepare forming an Islamic government through the unity of Islamic brotherhood from their interaction in the mosque.³³

A clearer and stronger support for the approach of the mosque as the place for the development of Islamic brotherhood is given by one of the most renowned Muslim historians in Malaysia, Dusuki Ahmad.³⁴ He suggests that the mosque of the Prophet was set up not for the sole purpose of prayer but more importantly as a place where the Prophet could eradicate the strong tribal ties and feelings into a united Muslim brotherhood. The mosque was used for many different activities all of which had this particular objective. Dusuki Ahmad has criticised

³² S. Hasan, 'Masjid Sebagai Pusat Peribadatan', *Dakwah*, (May, 1990), pp. 28-30

³³ A. Zain, 'Manfaatkan Masjid Untuk Perpaduan', *Dakwah*, (Dec. 1984), pp. 14-15

³⁴ Dusuki Ahmad, 'Peranan Masjid Sebagai Institusi Pembangunan', *Dakwah*, (September 1985), pp. 10-11

the present attitude that the mosque is meant purely for the performance of religious rituals and for the teaching of religious education. He has also criticised the religious scholars who emphasise the issues of mosque sanctity. These attitudes, he maintains, have resulted in the present neglect of mosques and their diminishing roles in the community affairs of the Muslims. Although he admits that specialisation of functions of many aspects of Islam requires separate buildings and institutions, the mosque should still retain the essence of its multi-functional nature that can attract the Muslim public to the mosque. He has strongly suggested that the mosque be used for all kinds of activities other than those related to prayers or religious rituals such as for recreation and the education of skills. He views that Muslims should perform all these functions at the mosque and when the call of prayer is announced all the activities would stop for the performance of prayers and resumed immediately after that. He advises that *imāms* should be trained in effective methods of management and in modern communication technology in the course of developing the Muslim community. Finally, he calls for a more suitable architectural guideline to meet the needs of the mosque as the place for community development.

One of the most vocal critics of the mosque institution has come from the *imām* of the Malaysian National Mosque, Ustaz Taib Azamudden Mohamed Taib.³⁵ Although he believes that the most important functions of the mosque are for prayer and meditative seclusion, he feels that the root of the physical and spiritual neglect of the mosque comes from the inactivity of the mosque in many respects. He is the only critic to have outlined specific programmes for the mosque that can be translated into architectural design. He maintains that the mosque must be made to appeal to the interest and needs of the modern Muslim lifestyle. He has suggested that the mosque be equipped with recreational functions for children and adults, accommodation facilities for travelers, rentable rooms for Muslims, health clinic, public welfare offices, and spaces for sales of certain products and items. The mosque, he maintains, should be a place frequented by Muslims for the ordinary affairs of life.

³⁵ Taib Azamudden Mohamed Taib, 'Masjid: Apa Peranan Sebenar?', Dewan Masyarakat, Jilid 26:Kel(9) pp. 16-17

One of the most important criticisms of the idea of the mosque comes from Dr. Sidi Gazalba, who lectures at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. In his book, Masjid: Pusat Ibadat dan Kebudayaan, he uses a sociological approach in the appraisal of the mosque as a place of worship and as the centre of Muslim culture.³⁶ He maintains firstly that worship in Islam is part of the Islamic concept of culture. The mosque is tied with all the aspects of culture which includes politics, social interaction, concept of knowledge, art, economy, philosophy and ritual worship. The crisis of the mosque is a result of an imbalance in the treatment of the Islamic culture. Dr. Gazalba views that an emphasis in any one of these aspects of culture would render the mosque ineffective as the instrument for developing the positive growth of the Muslim community. He quotes the present conditions in his native Indonesia where the emphasis of ritual worship has resulted in the decline in the use of the mosque. Certain Muslim communities have mixed and developed Islamic rituals to the point of extremism from the perspective of the Sunna such as the worship of the dead as evident in the presence of the tomb mosque. When this ritual of venerating the dead is associated with the mosque, the mosque is perceived as a sacred object that does not permit other cultural functions to be performed. He emphasises the dangers of over sanctifying the mosque as much as he cautions the over indulgence in its 'profane' functions. He feels that the mosque should present the unity of Islam as a way of life and cautions the government paid *imāms* to be the guardians of Islam rather than the puppets of their sponsors. He suggests that mosque users and designers should not emphasise any aspect of Islamic culture in this building. An emphasis of the mosque as a sacred edifice and an over treatment of the prayer space and its related architectural elements are to be avoided. The mosque, he feels, should be managed and designed for the ease and comfort of the Muslim community to perform their roles in uniting the Muslims while fostering the brotherhood of Islam.

Finally we describe the opinion of a Muslim architect, Ismail Serageldin, from his paper on 'Faith and the Environment'. In this work, he has suggested that the mosque be looked upon as a

³⁶ Sidi Gazalba, Masjid: Pusat Ibadat Dan Kebudayaan Islam 3rd Edition, (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1975)

'community centre' and that the designers should pay particular attention to the creation of a building that will help Muslims discover the total way of life of Islam;

Outside of dwellings, no discussion of individual structures in Muslim societies can ignore the role of the mosque. It is central to the design of any Muslim agglomeration. It is not only the place of worship but also the key to community activities. Granted that the complexity of modern life has forced many communal public activities into specialized structures, the tendency towards limiting the mosque to its liturgical function, 'a churchification of the mosque' is to be deplored. All the more so, since in Western Christian cultures there is at present an active movement to open up churches as foci of community activity to improve the communications between the church organisation and the community and to better utilize the buildings at times where there are no religious services.³⁷

To summarise, the views above suggests the idea of the mosque as more than a mere place of ritual worship. The mosque is seen to be a most important mechanism for the development of the Muslim community in all aspects of life. It is seen to be the place where unity and brotherhood can be fostered and strengthened through the encouragement of people to participate in many of the mosque's programmes. It is also the main place where the education of the Muslim community in relation to aspects of rituals and matters concerning the security and benefit of the community can take place. The proponents of this idea of the mosque suggest that the decline of the popularity and importance of the mosque among the Muslims are due to the fact that the present mosque institution does not follow the model of the early mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in Madīna. They maintain that whilst the Prophet's mosque was humble and multi-functional in character, the present mosque are direct opposite to it in their grand monumental expression and single-function purpose. They have, therefore, suggested a complete return of the mosque to its initial model of the mosque of the Prophet.

³⁷ Ismail Serageldin, 'Faith And The Environment', article in the book Space For Freedom (London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989), pp.213-225

There are several important architectural implications of this idea of the mosque. Firstly, it proposes that the early mosque of the Prophet in Madīna as the model *par excellence* to be imitated in all its aspects. Secondly the idea implies that the mosque is a kind of 'community centre' where it caters for more than just ritual activities aimed at developing the Muslim community. It also suggests that the mosque must be designed to meet the modern needs of the Muslim people in order to popularise its use to the masses. Finally, this view can be summed up as suggesting that the mosque is at its best if it were a multi-functional institution and is a failure if its function were restricted to only those of ritual worship. This position is entirely based on the idea that disregarding the Sunna of the Prophet violates an important aspect of Islam and encourages a decline of the Islamic community in all aspect of life.

Both of the preceeding views offer two different ideas about what the mosque is and what its main purpose should be. Both of them have valid basis in some aspect of the Muslim way of life. The first view offers the evidences of the architectural precedence of the past beginning with the architectural achievements of the Umayyad Caliphs where as the other view stresses the purity of values and principles of life inherent in the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and his four immediate successors. The first view advocates a kind of natural evolutionary process towards the specialisation of the mosque in its ritual functions whereas the second regards this particular process as an indication of the decline of the ideal Islamic values. The second view stresses the use of the traditions of the Prophet and his pious successors as the ideal framework for mosque design.

From the architectural perspective, both of these ideas imply different sets of design criteria for the architect. The mosque as a religious symbol whose function is prayer and meditation possesses a contrasting set of design principles than a mosque meant for the education and development of a community in almost all aspects of life. One is essentially the design of a monument whilst the other is a kind of community education centre. Since it is difficult to reconcile the two views and premature to choose either of the two positions, another approach towards solving the problem must be used.

1.3 The Research Approach Adopted

As with any other building, the problem of mosque design relates specifically to the functions it must cater for. A building is essentially a stage for the performance of human activities individually or collectively. The functions of the building relate, in turn, to the main purpose of what the building is for. For example, if a building is meant for collective worship, then the functions of providing for the rituals of prayers must be catered for in terms of their spatial, lighting and acoustic requirements. For a building whose origin is rooted not only to the mundane needs of people but also to a certain world view, it is important to understand what its idea is in relation to the philosophy or doctrine of the initial founders. This idea may be termed as the initial concept of the building. When the idea goes through a long historical process, it changes according to the changes and development of the world view. If the building were untainted by the personal and selfish whims of the patrons or creators which contradict the purity of the particular world view and way of life, it retains an eternal essence without which it ceases to be what it was initially meant for. The building may take different forms and add on many functions initially non-existent in its program but its eternal essence persist independent of time, place and culture. The building possesses what can be phrased as an eternal idea.

The problem of the mosque can be solved only through a clear understanding of what its initial conception and eternal ideas are. The view that the mosque is nothing more than a place of religious worship is valid from the perspective of certain interpretation of the meanings and purpose of religious rituals in Islam and from the fact that change is a part of the historical process of any part of a system of life. The view that the mosque is the centre of communal activity is valid from some aspects of the Islamic idea on communal life and that idea is based on the precedence from the Sunna. Both of the views have valid claims and yet both cannot be taken in isolation. The way of life of Islam is based partly on the direct imitation of the Prophet's Sunna and partly on the independent judgement of its followers concerning matters of culture or the personal and social lifestyles of Muslims in various social, political and economic contexts. The sacred rituals of *ṣalāt* and the

performance of the *hadj* are examples of direct imitation of the Sunna where as the development of economics, education and political administration are some examples of those aspects of life which are not based on pure imitation but on the independent decision of the scholars derived from the understanding of the spirit or the eternal values of Islam related to these specific fields. Islam cannot be based on past precedence which has no basis in the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet's Sunna. The fact that Muslims have done certain things in the past are not necessarily valid as precedence in themselves.

It is, therefore, essential to understand the initial concept and eternal ideas of the mosque within the scope of the above mentioned framework. The Prophet's conception of the mosque is important because it embodies the spirit of the ideal Islamic way of life. However since it is rooted in the forces of the historical past, it is important to identify only the characteristic of the mosque that is eternal. Throughout the history of Islam, the mosque has developed to serve various functions and purposes. The ideal mosque is rooted in its eternal message and not in its impure historical forms.

The thesis, therefore, adopts the approach that the design of the modern mosque in the Sunnī Muslim context must be based on understanding the relationship between the eternal idea of the mosque and the needs of the present Muslim society. In order to identify the characteristics of the eternal idea of the mosque, it is important to understand the initial or the Prophet's conception of the mosque. The initial conception of the mosque is a product influenced by the early teachings of Islam, the pre-Islamic ideas of worship and that of the houses of worship and the socio-political conditions of the first Muslim community in Madīna. The eternal idea of the mosque is based on the understanding of the initial concept of the mosque in the light of the eternal message of the rituals associated with the mosque and the model of Islamic communal living. The Prophet's mosque had catered for the performance of the ritual worship and to the activities which form an important model of Islamic communal living. The historical mosque of the Prophet must be interpreted in the light of the eternal meaning of the rituals such as prayers and *i'tikāf* and the roles and responsibilities of the individual Muslim towards the Muslim community and of the collective responsibilities of the community towards the development of

the individual. The design of a modern mosque can only be developed after the characteristic of the eternal mosque are fully understood.

The approach thus calls for a reinterpretation of the *Qur'ān*, the Prophet's *ḥādiths*, the rulings of the *Sunnī* jurists and the writings of modern religious scholars pertaining to the subjects of the purpose of the mosque, the religious rituals of Islam and the Islamic model of communal living. However, before proceeding with this analysis, it is important to discuss the views of architectural historians who have given many opinions concerning the interpretation of mosque architecture. The subject of the next chapter illustrates the fact that even though the historians have dealt with a great number of issues and problems related to the understanding of mosque architecture, their work possess little value to this work since their aims and agendas of research differ almost entirely from the approach of this thesis.

Chapter Two

AN APPRAISAL OF THE METHOD AND APPROACH OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY CONCERNING THE IDEA OF THE MOSQUE

Introduction

In an effort to understand any building type, it is common to look at its historical development in the works of architectural history. Architectural history is one of the most important resources for architects, architectural students, academics of the social sciences and the general public in the understanding of any building type. With the geographical expansion of the modern architect's building commissions that places the designer in places and cultures alien to his own and also his own cultural alienation to the users of his buildings in his own locality, the works of architectural historians serve as one of the most crucial guides to the planning and design of buildings. In many cases, it is an acknowledged fact that the discipline has contributed immensely to the understanding of architecture and the various cultures that inhabit the buildings around the world and at different times in history.

A survey of the history of mosque architecture through the works of architectural history, therefore, seems to be the best starting place to begin the search towards a solution to the crisis of mosque architecture in the present time. It seems that the criteria of mosque design can be derived through a detailed analysis of the mass of material on mosque architecture compiled by architectural historians throughout almost two centuries. Since it was established in the previous chapter that the crisis of the mosque can only be resolved through a clarification of the initial conception and eternal idea of the mosque, it is important to

describe what this thesis seeks from the subject of architectural history towards meeting that end.

One of the first information that must be ascertained concerns the Prophet Muhammad's conception of the mosque. This initial conception can be derived through an understanding of the functions of the pre-Islamic mosque in the Arab society and those of the Prophet's mosque during his lifetime. The next step is to understand the functions of the mosques throughout the history of Islam. It is crucial to include all types of mosques whether tribal or royal in the choices of the mosques in obtaining this information so as to ensure the impartiality in the representation of Islam in the past. In an attempt to understand the architecture of the mosque in history, the initial and the historical functions of the mosque must always be understood within the framework of the Islamic idea of worship which includes both the rituals and non-ritual acts that are associated with the mosque. The idea of worship in Islam includes the Muslim's individual and collective roles and responsibilities. All of these information must be determined by the use of the religious sources of Islam such as the *Qur'ān*, the *Al-Ḥadīth* and the writings concerning Islamic jurisprudence interpreted within the *Sunnī* context of Islam.

From the above description of the information required it is not, therefore, the history of the development of the mosque that is of concern to the present work, but rather to the need to re-discover its essential nature. It is not surprising, from this perspective, that the works of architectural history are of limited help in this work. The present chapter contains an analysis of the approaches used in a selected work of architectural history to illustrate the case that the concerns of the historians in their works have little value to this thesis. However, before proceeding with the presentation of the analysis, it is essential to understand a brief account of the purpose, methods, approaches and problems related to architectural history.

2.1 An Overview of the Aims, Approaches, Determinants and Problems of Architectural History

The following account concerning architectural history is based mainly from three sources. They are David Watkin's The Rise Of Architectural History, W. Eugene Kleinbauer's Modern Perspective In Western Art History and Spiro Kostoff's A History Of Architecture: Settings And Rituals. Kleinbauer's work is important because it covers in great detail a critical analysis and survey of the development of the approaches and determinants of art and architectural history. Watkin's work is selected since it is the only one of its kind that deals with the historical development of architectural historical writing. Kostoff's work is chosen because he is among the few historians who recognise the problems of architectural history.

2.1.1 The Aims of Architectural History

David Watkin suggests that architectural history began in Germany in the early years of the 18th century.¹ In the early years of architectural historical works, historians tend to concentrate mainly on comparative description of buildings without much emphasis on suggesting any kind of theory of stylistic change. The historians were working with various intentions of catering to the upper class interest in the exotic, in developing artistic and aesthetic taste and also as guides to clients interested in the conservation of old monuments.

It is not the purpose of this section to present a history of the various intentions and methods of architectural history but it is necessary to highlight the fact that the aims and methods of architectural history varies according to the agendas of each historians and are influenced by the prevailing intellectual interests and tastes of the periods they were part of.

David Watkin has suggested that the aims of architectural history can be divided into three parts; the practical, historical and the aesthetic aim.³ The practical aim of the subject is the identification of the building in terms of its date of construction and completion, its designer

¹ David Watkin, The Rise Of Architectural History (London: The Architectural Press, 1980) pp. 1-6

³ Ibid., p. vii-viii

or builder, the building's clients and the main purpose or function of the building. Unlike art history, architectural historian has little problem with provenance because most buildings are constructed permanently at its site. This part of the aim of architectural history is relatively easy with the proper sources such as drawings and building remnant.

The second part of architectural history, which is the historical aim, is relatively more difficult than the first. The aim here is to ascertain why the building was built, in other words, what it was used for. The historian will have to rely on the interpretation of the religious, sociological and cultural sources in order to perform this task. This is not an easy task since the historian researching the subject is usually not a member of the society and culture which produced the building. There is also the added difficulty of the personal taste or intention of the client and designer that is difficult to ascertain from documentary evidences.

The third and final aim of architectural history is called the aesthetic aim. The aesthetic aim of the subject is to analyse and suggest the meanings of the buildings and the reasons for their stylistic changes throughout history. This is undoubtedly the most difficult part of the subject and understandably the most controversial one. It can be described as the realm of absolute conjecture where there is usually never enough satisfactory evidences to support or disprove any theories forwarded by the historians.

There are some historians who concentrate on one or a combination of the three aims. Watkin maintains that the best historians have attempted to combine the three aims and have balanced them appropriately in order to present the best documentation and interpretation of architecture of a place or of a period.

Spiro Kostof suggests the aims of architectural history through a discussion on the task of the historians in presenting buildings of the past as follows:

The historian brings time under control; isolates random scrap and arranges them into a trenchant sequence; sets up relationship among far flung structures, through the hindsight of this day and the collective knowledge of the discipline... The historian does this, first by insisting on the recapture of the true physical reality of things built, whether they have since been altered, damaged or

destroyed totally. This is a primary task akin to archaeology, and makes use of material that is both visual and literary in nature. And then the historian must go beyond this established reality of the buildings to understand what they are, how they came to be and why they are the way they are.⁴

Clearly in this extract, Kostof places more emphasis on the true functions of buildings than Watkin. Kostof also makes no mention of any emphasis on the aesthetic aim of architectural history mentioned by Watkin to explain stylistic changes.

It can, therefore, be observed that there are as many aims and methods of architectural history as there are historians. It is because of this fact that the subject is beset with many issues and problems. These issues and problems must be understood if an appraisal of the works of some historians are to be attempted. Before reviewing the problems associated with architectural history and attempting the appraisal of some of its work, it is essential to comprehend some of the approaches used by historians in producing their works.

2.1.2 A Review of Approaches in Architectural History

In describing the approaches of art historians, Kleinbauer has divided them into two main categories. These categories are called the 'intrinsic' and the 'extrinsic' approaches.⁵ Although he emphasises the works of art historians Kleinbauer has given adequate review of some architectural historical studies.

2.1.2.1 The Intrinsic Approach

Simply defined, the intrinsic approach is the description and analysis of the inherent qualities of the artwork. In architecture the approach is characterised by the emphasis on the description and analysis of materials, techniques, dating, authorship, formal and symbolic functions of the building. The investigator concentrates on the building

⁴ Spiro Kostof, A History Of Architecture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) , p. 3

⁵ This part of the chapter is summarised from W. Eugene Kleinbauer's discussion of 'Genres of Modern Scholarship' in his Modern Perspectives Of Art History (New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston Inc., 1971), pp. 37-105

and its elements without considering any external design influence. There are historians who have concentrated on the aspects of materials and technology of buildings, on 'architectural connoisseurship' and architectural iconography.

Some historians choose to emphasise the material and technological aspects of architecture to forward their theories of change throughout the passage of time. Kleinbauer mentions that the approach of art connoisseurship has also been used in the description of architectural works. The emphasis of this approach is in defining the work of art in its initial place in time and provenance. The approach generally relies heavily on the comparison of formalistic aspects of the artwork. In architecture, this type of approach has developed into formalistic studies of buildings in the 19th century. Buildings are described and compared from their physical characters into documentary studies closely related to archeological type researches. Kleinbauer cites the works of K.A.C. Creswell and Joseph Strzygowski as some of the few early historians using this method of research in Islamic architecture.

The study of iconography is the research into the inner meaning of artworks. It is one of the new approaches in art history which developed after much documentary studies in the formalistic approach had been produced. The aim of this approach is to understand the meaning of the artwork within its own temporal, social and religious context. The first level of research is to discover the 'natural' meanings through the formal analysis of the artwork where these meanings may be interpreted based on the general human response to the object under study. The second level of research attempts to understand the symbolic meaning of the elements as understood by the lay people of the times which produced the artwork. The final and most difficult level is to establish the meaning of the artwork through the eyes of its creator and patron. In architecture, this approach was only introduced after the Second World War and can be considered as a recent development. Its aim is to seek the symbolic intent of the architectural elements and the buildings as seen through the eyes of the designer, client and user during the time of its creation. It also seeks to establish the many hidden functions of spaces in buildings which may not be recorded by the social or political historians of the period.

2.1.2.2 The Extrinsic Approach

In contrast to the intrinsic approach, the extrinsic approach centres around the interpretation of the meaning of the artwork through the analysis of its external aspects. Some historians have emphasised the biographical information of artists, the influence of patronage, the impact of the history of ideas, the cultural context, the use of sociological studies and psychoanalytical researches in the interpretation of the meaning of the artwork.

Many historians rely on the documentary evidences that would enable them to construct a biography of the artist or architect as the primary means to understand the meanings and processes involved in the production of the artwork. Such an approach may be questionable from the aspect of the biasness of the information particularly related to the artist who might consciously mislead others of his or her intentions regarding the creation of the work.

One of the new fields of study in Psychology is the psychoanalytical method of the subjects concerned. This method has only recently been applied to art and architectural history. One serious problem with this approach is that it limits the understanding of the artwork within the framework of psychological concepts and concerns which may be inappropriate in the discussion concerning a religious or cultural belief outside the framework of psychological discussion.

There are also historians who concentrate on explaining the development of architecture by interpreting buildings within the framework of the philosophy of ideas. Ideas such as 'evolution' and 'progress' in the history of man is related to the concerns of artists and architects as those who express the aspiration of the time and of a socially accepted philosophy.

There are also those who study the meaning and development of architecture through a detailed analysis of the culture which produced the artwork. Jacob Burckhardt is credited to have used this approach in his account of the various aspects of civilisation during the Italian Renaissance in understanding buildings in that place and period. Much of his work is based on the anthropological method of investigating cultures of different people in various times and places.

There are art and architectural historians who subscribe to the sociological method of analysing artwork. As with social historians these scholars believe that only through the understanding of 'universal social laws' can the artwork be made comprehensible to all. Fundamental to their belief is that the artwork is a true reflection of the society that it is a part of.

Since a work of art is directly influenced by private individuals, monarchs, governments or museum curators that commission the artwork, the study of the concerns of patronage has received credible acceptance in the fields of art and architectural history.

The artwork is sometimes a product of a particular political or religious movement that moves against the tide of the established social norm in a particular historical period. There was a time when the religious aspects of knowledge can only be accessed by priests and theologians but at the present time this information is available and indispensable to the researcher of art and architectural history.

2.1.3 Determinants of Architectural Historical Approaches

One of the important things to understand in appraising works of architectural history is that the historian is not free from the concerns of his or her own times and therefore writes according to selected perspectives. Of this fact, Kleinbauer maintains as follows:

When thinking and writing about works of art, the historian is consciously or unconsciously influenced by various determinants. He does not work without aspirations, preconceptions, and suppositions. His training, knowledge, and experience provide for him an intellectual platform from which to launch his inquiries. As an individual he is a social phenomenon, a product of his period and environment. So rather than investigate the visual arts in a vacuum insulated from external conditions and forces, he is guided by the times to which he belongs, and he is a spokesman thereof. He stands not without but within the moving stream of the course of history. How he approaches the arts from that stream is dependent upon its various currents and bends, and upon his position in relation to others in the stream. As he moves in the stream, his angles of vision and views of the arts change

constantly, and as this happens the art history he writes changes and acquires new prospects. He can double back to previous points in the stream, and even though he may attempt to accelerate the speed of the current, he finds himself unable to move to the uncharted parts of the stream faster than the current will carry him. He can assess art from the present and can look back into the past to try to reconstruct its initial course; but he can hardly envisage its future destination. His perspectives are established by his preparation for the journey, by the point at which he stands in the stream, and by the directions in which he may decide to look.⁶

It is clear from this excerpt that there are many determinants of architectural history and that historians possess their own sets of motives in constructing their theories of historical change. In this respect, Watkin adds the following comments:

We shall also observe the variety of motives which have prompted the writing of architectural history: thus, in the nineteenth centuries the study of medieval architecture was often closely bound up with the promotion of specific religious ideas, as it was in the early nineteenth century with the rise of nationalism; the exceptional dominance in England of the country house as a building type and as a social focus from at least the mid-sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries has understandably been reflected in the scope of modern architectural writing in this country. It will also become increasingly clear that two of the most important and persistent motives which lie behind the production of architectural history are the practice and the preservation of architecture... Thus, whereas historians frequently have a concealed axe to grind, generally political or religious, architectural historians have often had an openly displayed axe: the furtherance of a particular type of present-day architecture.⁷

Kleinbauer also adds that art and architectural historians, in arranging, classifying and interpreting artworks, have to rely on a particular conception of history itself.⁸ The historian is influenced by a

⁶ Ibid., p. 13

⁷ Watkin, p. viii-ix

⁸ Op cit., This part of the chapter is summarised from Kleinbauer's chapter on 'Determinants of Art Historical Investigation', pp.13-36

philosophy of history accepted within the intellectual community of his time. Specifically, the concept of history which the historians subscribe to dictate the manner in which they present their findings into a particular division of history, the nature of historical period and the causes of historical change. Most historians do not readily admit their use of a particular theory of stylistic change. Theories of stylistic change abound in most of the 19th and early 20th century works of art and architectural history. One of the most popular theories used to explain the development of styles in art and architecture is the theory of evolution.

Kleinbauer describes three kinds of evolutionary theories related to art and architectural history. The first is the 'straight line evolution theory'. It is the one that started the adoption of the theory of evolution to all art form analysis. This theory was adapted from the Darwinian and Aristotelian idea of change in living organism. With the use of this theory, the idea of 'progress' of art from a primeval state to an ever increasing developmental stage was born. Historians of art and architecture began to seek and arrange artwork to illustrate the 'ultimate' progress of artform usually from an Eastern primeval heritage into the 'ideal' Western model.

An adaptation of this evolutionary theory is the cyclical evolution theory where the development of art is seen in cyclic phases such as the three phase rhythm of rise-maturity-decline and five phase rhythm of birth-adolescence-maturity-decline-death. A third theory can be described as the Hegelian spiral evolutionary theory. In this theory, Hegel postulates that man, nature and history is in a constant state of struggle which brings about human progress. This struggle at any one stage produces a stage called a thesis which is bound to be negated by an antithesis and this in turn would produce a synthesis, which forms another thesis at a higher stage of the spiral evolution. Art and architecture, being a product of man's creative act, is embedded in this thesis-antithesis-synthesis cycle which helps to explain the differences in the various styles produced.

It can, thus, be seen that there are many determinants of architectural history influencing the interpretation of buildings worthy of being considered as 'historical'. It can easily be seen how buildings of a different society, culture and religion can be misinterpreted in the

process of documentation and arrangement. The final part of this section deals primarily with the shortcomings and controversial issues with regard to the writing of architectural history.

2.1.4 Controversial Issues and Problems of Architectural History

Most of the controversial issues and problems of architectural history are directly related to the specific agendas of historians contained in their work. It is important to understand the various common agendas selected and emphasised by historians before any attempt be made at appraising their works

Of the three aims of architectural history mentioned in the previous sections, Watkins has suggested that the historical and aesthetic aims are the most difficult to verify.⁹ He further mentions three main problems of architectural history. The first problem is the determination of a building's true meaning. To comprehend the meaning of a building a historian may have to call on a considerable religious, cultural and sociological knowledge. This is necessary because the meaning of the building may not be as obvious or may have evolved or may be an eccentric act of the patron to monumentalise some aspect of his life. The second problem concerns the aesthetic comprehension of a building, in which some may have styles and forms that are charged with different meanings in their lifetime through the use and perception by different cultures at different time or that the buildings have no intended meaning whatsoever. The third problem relates to the motives or agendas of architectural historians. Watkins has quoted the attempt of seventeenth and nineteenth century architectural historians' bias view on medieval architectural history in order to propagate and support certain religious and political ideas.

One of the strongest critics of modern architectural history is Spiro Kostof. In the introductory chapter of his book, A History Of Architecture, he mentions three faults of architectural historians.¹⁰ Firstly, most historians differentiate clearly between a structure that can be classified as 'architecture' and those that merit only the label of

⁹ Watkin, The Rise of Architectural History, p. viii

¹⁰ Kostof, A History Of Architecture, pp. 12-18

'building'. He maintains that this distinction was born from the European tradition of Vitruvian architectural principles of *venustas*, *utilitas* and *firmitas* or more popularly interpreted by Sir Henry Wotton as delight, commodity and firmness. Only the buildings intentionally imbued by the designer with aesthetic qualities merit the classification of 'architecture'. Since most of these buildings can only be afforded by the social elite such as monarchs, the governments or religious institutions such as the Church, historians have mainly selected these few buildings in order to represent the artistic aspiration or intellectual prowess and also in interpreting the many aspects of the way of life of a society. Kostof maintains that this action is clearly unjustified on the grounds that these building patrons may not reflect the way of life of the whole society. Furthermore the quality of delight and aesthetics is subjective and can also be applied to 'non-pedigreed' architecture.

Secondly, Kostof mentions that although historians prefer to select the buildings from the social elite of a particular society, they have not shown complete impartiality to all the buildings from that selection. As mentioned by Watkin, each historian normally has 'an axe to grind' where their support or preference for a particular type of architectural style or ideas dictate their arrangement and analysis of buildings.

Finally, Kostof mentions the issue of treating the architecture of Eastern and 'exotic' cultures such as the Islamic, Chinese and Indian cultures with little respect for the belief systems of these societies. He quotes Sir Bannister Fletcher's classification of these cultures as the 'non-historical styles' which eliminates any scholarly consideration of their architecture. Kostof labels this attitude as 'Western chauvinism' and maintains that this kind of attitude jeopardises any honest attempt at studying and learning from these cultures.

To most of these issues and problems we present two other serious concerns to be considered in the process of appraising any historian's work particularly pertaining to that of mosque interpretation. The first problem deals with the questionable ability of the historians to understand in depth the religious life. Many of the meanings of a religious ritual will only be comprehended through their regular and lifetime practice. Even the true meanings of the most important aspect of a religion may not be as obvious or recorded in tradition or scripture. Without access to this essential key to the religion,

it is near impossible for architectural historians to comprehend the true meanings of a building designed for the particular religious community. Most historians, faced with this problem seldom acknowledge them but try to present their interpretations of the building's meanings and functions and also the important aspects of the religion itself through a comparative method with a religion or way of life which they are most familiar with or a part of.

The second serious problem concerning the present method of architectural history is the generalisation of the way other non-Western cultures perceive architecture and art. It is a common fact that scholars involved in the method of architectural history were raised on the Greco-Roman concept of art and architecture. To impose this framework on the artifacts and building remnants of other cultures such as Islam is an act which is too generous a claim and presumptuous.

2.2 An Appraisal of the Agendas of Architectural History on Mosque Architecture

This section contains an analysis of the works of architectural history concerning the idea of the mosque. It contains the argument that the works of architectural history cannot be used in the thesis because the historians' aims and agendas in their works are different. Their methods towards the selection and interpretation of architecture are governed by their personal agendas of research. Almost all the works emphasise the importance of artistic or constructional issues to the actual uses of the buildings. The choices of the selection are mostly buildings of the elite patronage as representative of the cultures which were investigated. Furthermore historians have preferred to evaluate the meanings of buildings using their own personal interpretations of religious sources from the perspectives of their own social, cultural, religious and intellectual framework. Finally, their interpretation is governed by their philosophy of history or a preference for a specific set of aesthetic principles.

The section is divided into three parts. The first contains an examination of the early period of mosque architectural history characterised mainly by the lack of reference to primary religious and historical sources of Islam. The second period marks the extensive use of



the primary sources interpreted mainly through a cultural framework in contrast to that of the Islamic way of life. The works of contemporary historians whose emphasis is the understanding of architecture from the Islamic perspective are examined in the final part of this section.

2.2.1 The First Period

The first period of mosque architectural history writing spans between the middle of the 19th century until the period before the Second World War. The nineteenth and early twentieth century were characterised by the rise of the European political and economic power attested by their vast colonisation of Eastern countries. It was also the height of the European view of the idea that their culture represented the best end of the human evolutionary line. It was a period of active research into the history and way of life of non-European countries mainly as tools for colonisation and partly to fulfill the curiosity of the European elite culture. Their views of the Eastern lifestyles are characterised by the attitude that the West was far superior in every sense and that these societies must be judged according to the Western standard of socio-religious values. The period was also characterised by the break between science and religion in which the scientific evolutionary principle had reigned supreme in all social and artistic disciplines. These historical incidents play a critical role in the interpretation of buildings both in the European and non-European worlds.

One of the earliest architectural historians who dealt with the architecture of the mosque was James Fergusson. He was one of the earliest writers to formalise a criteria for defining what constituted 'architecture' and mere building. In his book A Handbook Of Architecture, he was most interested in the nature of a 'true style' of architecture and had outlined the principles which he believed constituted this concept.¹¹ He proceeded to describe the characteristic of architecture by emphasising its formalistic concern of mass, ornament, stability, monumentality and proportion. His choice of buildings which include the mosque are therefore not representative of Islam. Throughout the book, the description of mosque architecture was

¹¹ James Fergusson, A Handbook Of Architecture (London: John Murray, 1859), pp.xxv-lvii

mainly related to the evaluation of its artistic merit in comparison to churches and temples of the Western world. On the interpretation of the uses of the mosque, Fergusson had not relied on any primary religious source of Islam and he, therefore, had nothing much to say concerning the practices of Islam. His view of the idea of the mosque can be observed through his acceptance of the non-utilitarian aspect of a religious edifice and that the architecture of the house of God is the eternal search for the sublime expression. His view of the mosque can also be interpreted from his refusal to accept the early mosque of the Prophet as a worthy piece of architecture. He had accepted only those buildings which developed later in the Muslim conquests that are influenced by the Roman, Persian, Byzantine and Indian architectural heritage as worthy of a religious building.¹² He viewed the mosque as poor and haphazard designs more given to luxurious and frivolous expressions and incapable of producing anything similar to the religious spirit of the Gothic Cathedrals or the sublime and eternal expression of Egyptian temples and the intellectual beauty of Greek architecture.¹³

The scientific revolution in intellectual thought which gave birth to the idea that the investigation of history was as scientific as those of the physical sciences may have influenced Sir Banister Fletcher's approach to architectural history. His book entitled A History Of Architecture On The Comparative Method is one of the most widely used textbooks of architectural history.¹⁴ He was mainly concerned about the development of architectural history in Europe. Fletcher was influenced by the method of 'scientific historical writing' in which architectural history is analysed through the influence of politics, religion, geography, climate and culture. Fletcher had used the so called scientific method of deducing the meaning of architecture through their formalistic description with little understanding from any other source of reference from the particular culture and architecture he was studying. Most of the information regarding Islamic architecture had come from a translated copy of Arabian Nights and not from the religious or historical literature of Islam. From this information, he had

¹² Ibid., p. 383

¹³ Ibid., p. 444

¹⁴ Sir Banister Fletcher A History Of Architecture On The Comparative Methods (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1896) 16th edition

derived several erroneous ideas of Islam and the mosque. Having stereotyped Eastern cultures as bizarre and irrational he had classified 'Mahometans' as 'fatalists' who were concerned mainly with the present life which seemingly explained the Muslim's preference for an architecture of beautiful ornamentation.¹⁵ He mistook the role of the *mu'adhin* as priests and the *dikka* as the holy place to recite the *Ḳur'ān*.¹⁶ He had alluded to the number of horse shoe arches as representative of mystical symbolism in Islamic architecture. Fletcher's analysis of the various influences of architecture from the social, political, religious, climatic and geographical contexts were made without integrating and relating them to the meaning of religion in Islam. It is clearly seen that the author is unconcerned about the Islamic perspective and used the Western secular idea of religion in attempting the interpretation of architecture of the Muslim civilisation.

Two other works of the same period illustrate the primary interest of aesthetic taste and the idea of beauty. The works are by A. Rosengarten and Heathcote Statham. A. Rosengarten's Handbook Of Architectural Styles is a catalogue describing the various styles of architecture in Europe and some countries in the East.¹⁷ The aim of the book can be inferred from its concluding remarks in which the author mentioned the crucial importance of the knowledge of the different characters of architectural styles in order to develop better 'tastes' in architecture.¹⁸ The work is a simplified overview of architectural styles classified under the categories of Ancient, Romanesque and Modern styles. The subject of Islamic architecture is placed under the second category and the choice of buildings was restricted to palaces, huge mosques and tombs. There was no attempt to describe the way of life of Muslims in the description of mosques apart from the mention of prayer as the main religious ritual. Rosengarten began the description of mosque architecture with the mosque of Ibn Tulun without mentioning anything about the mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 935

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 940

¹⁷ A. Rosengarten A Handbook Of Architectural Styles, translated from the German by W. Collett-Sanders (London: Chatto & Windus, 1893)

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 500

The main aim of the book A Short Critical History Of Architecture by H. Heathcote Statham is described by Hugh Braun in the preface to the third edition as a compilation of architectural styles to feed the taste of architects and patrons in the 'leisure age' of Victorian England.¹⁹ Statham defined architecture as an abstract work of construction for representing some purposeful symbolism.²⁰ He maintained that architecture was the highest form of art of man in the search for beauty.²¹ He suggested a progressive concept of evolution from the primitive architecture exemplified in Egyptian Architecture to the highly developed products of Modern 20th century architecture. The evolutionary stages suggested began with the Egyptian architecture, maturing in the Greek Classical style, the Romanesque, the Gothic and into the Modern era. The description of Islamic architecture and the mosque are placed as an 'interlude' which represented the transition between the Romanesque and the Gothic styles.²² He had also maintained that the second primary task of the historian, apart from interpretation, was the appraisal and evaluation of architecture according to a particular taste or idea of the best style.²³

All of the works in the early part of this period had ignored the significance of the Prophet's conception of a mosque. The historians preferred to select mosques of the Umayyad period which possess their notion of 'architectural significance' in understanding the initial conception of the mosque. This is mainly due to their interest for the artistic worth of buildings and the progressive idea of society. This interest had led them to consider the idea that Islamic values and way of life became more refined and advanced as time progresses. Unlike these works, the later part of this period is characterised by a greater interest for the initial concept of the mosque. This period is also characterised by a greater use of secondary sources more scholarly than the Arabian Nights.

¹⁹ Hugh Braun, Preface to H. Heathcote Statham's A History Of Architecture (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1912) 3rd. Edition

²⁰ H. Heathcote Statham, A Short Critical History Of Architecture (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1912) p. 3

²¹ Ibid., p. 3

²² Ibid., pp. 7-9

²³ Ibid., p. 3

One of the earliest works on Islamic Architecture as a subject by itself is G.T. Rivoira's Moslem Architecture: Its Origins And Development.²⁴ Rivoira was interested in tracing the origins of Islamic architecture through the analysis of the architectural influence of Muslim architectural monuments before the 12th century. He suggested that the architecture of these buildings can be traced to its Christian origins in Armenia and the Iberian Peninsula. His work can be considered as archaeological as he was not interested in interpreting the architecture of mosques. Although he discussed the origins of the mosque from Caetani's and Lammen's theories there was no serious attempt to pursue the problem of the initial idea of the mosque. He is contented in mentioning Caetani's theory that the mosque was actually the Prophet's house venerated after his death and raised to a position of a sacred edifice. Rivoira also quoted Lammen's claim that the mosque was nothing but a model of the Arab tribal '*madjlis*' or chieftain tent. Aside from this introductory statements, the work is not useful to the thesis because Rivoira ignored the functions of the mosque in the history of the Muslim civilisation.

One of the earliest accounts of Islamic architecture to have relied mostly on historical sources of Islam is Richmond's Moslem Architecture.²⁵ In this book, he defined architecture as a product of the conflict between man's needs and the perpetually changing economic and political conditions. The Prophet's Mosque was seen only as a meagre beginning of a primitive stage of Islam. He suggested that the mosque had evolved in its final form in the buildings influenced by the Roman and Byzantine culture. Richmond saw the mosque mainly as a prayer space. He viewed the essential purpose of the mosque only as a shelter, direction indicator and as a private prayer space for the worshipper. The end purpose of the mosque was to provide for the purely physical, ritualistic and political needs of the Muslim community.²⁶ The simple

²⁴ G.T. Rivoira Moslem Architecture: Its Origins And Development, translated by G. M'N Rushforth (London: Oxford University Press, 1918)

²⁵ E.T. Richmond Moslem Architecture: Some Causes And Consequences (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1926)

²⁶ Ibid., p. 3

'For a place of prayer in a hot and crowded city, the first needs are shelter from the sun and seclusion from passing scenes. It is also necessary in the interest of order and worship in common, that all should prostrate themselves in the same direction; hence an indication of direction is needed. These

architectural expression of the mosque he viewed was the result of the poor economic conditions of the early Muslims. Nothing of the Prophet's thoughts on the matter of building mosques and its expression and purposes were even hinted at. Richmond reinforced his economic based interpretation of the purpose of the mosque to include the political expression of the Moslem conquerors in such cities as Damascuss and Kūfa. The concept of the mosque therefore is seen as an ordinary product of luxury and leisure subjected to the whims and the economic situations of the patrons free from the shackles of the Prophet's traditions and the ideal spirit of Islam.

2.2.2 The Middle Period

The Middle period of research on mosque architecture spanned about thirty years after the Second World War. It was mainly characterised by the extensive use of primary religious and historical sources of Islam in the understanding of Islamic architecture. It was also a period that saw historians grappling with the difficulty in reconciling the great achievements of Islamic architecture and the contrasting messages on art and architecture provided by the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet. The Prophet's mosque was given a greater focus as an initial concept but was still not accepted fully as a piece of significant architectural work. This may be because, although the historians had more access to the religious and historical information on Islam, there is still little effort in attempting to understand its message. Islam was still being interpreted as a spiritual movement whose architectural glory was connected to its political conquests and cultural assimilation of the Greek, Roman and Persian heritage. These views can be ascertained from the works by Creswell, Jairazbhoy and Hoag.

One of the most respected scholars of Muslim architecture is K.A.C. Creswell. In his Short Account of Muslim Architecture, he had attempted a chronological description of archeological findings and existing buildings in the Muslim civilisation. He had also attempted to reconstruct the buildings that had vanished from the surface of the earth

were the essential and only needs for which provision was made in the first mosque. The followers of the Prophet at that time were poor. Makka, with its revenues from pilgrims, had not yet been won for their cause, and the elementary needs of shelter and seclusion had to be supplied in the simplest manner possible, and by no means of the readiest material. The needs of a mosque are the same today as they were in the time of the Prophet.'

through an in-depth analysis of the historical literature concerning the Muslim world. He had not clearly outlined his concept of architecture or described in detail the characteristics of the buildings which he considered worthy of artistic significance. However his idea of architecture as opposed to mere buildings can be extracted from the implications of the following statements.

Arabia, at the rise of Islam, does not appear to have possessed anything worthy of the name of architecture. Only a small portion of the population was settled, and these lived in dwellings which were scarcely more than hovels.²⁷

Architecture, then, to Creswell was a product of a civilised culture of which the Arabs who possess nothing 'worthy of the name of architecture' were considered as primitive. The houses were described in a purely physical manner. In the description of the Prophet's house, Creswell again resorted to a physical evaluation;

Such was the house of the leader of the community at Medina . Nor did Muhammad wish to alter these conditions; he was entirely without architectural ambitions , and Ibn Sa'd records the following saying of his: " The most unprofitable thing that eateth up the wealth of a Believer is building. "²⁸

The Prophet's house was not considered by Creswell as a mosque because of its meagre expression and multitude of secular functions. Creswell had dismissed the simplicity of construction in the first significant mosque of Islam as a product of the personal whim and taste of the Prophet which had nothing to do with Islam. The architectural concept of the mosque held by the Prophet does not fit the model of the later Muslim civilisation and Creswell's own perception of a house of God. This opinion is reinforced by the following statement;

No further change had taken place in Muhammad's house at the time of his death on 8 June 632. He was buried in the room which he had occupied in his lifetime. His house has not yet become a

²⁷ K.A.C. Creswell, A Short Account of Muslim Architecture. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1958)

p.1

²⁸ Ibid., p. 4

mosque and its transformation to such was by no means a rapid process. It apparently remained a house long after his death, for Abu Bakr, on being elected Khalif or Successor, made use of it in the same way as Muhammad himself. It was still a house in A.D. 655, when the Khalif Uthman was murdered there in the room next to that in which the Prophet lay buried. Caetani considers that the fundamental change took place when Ali transferred the seat of government to Kufa in 657 and Medina sank back to the status of a provincial town. It was then that the memories of the Prophet, with which it was so intimately associated, raised it to the grade of sanctuary, as the place where more than half of the Qur'an was revealed, the place which had been his home for ten years, and finally his grave.²⁹

Creswell's opinion differed significantly from those held by the Prophet and his Companions because they had all considered the Prophet's house as a mosque. Creswell accepted the house as a mosque when its function turned to a symbolic one and became a kind of architectural memorial. His views of the mosque as a prayer space with a symbolic significance and possessing the architectural characteristics of a monumental house of worship can be seen in the following statement;

In Syria at this time we do not hear of any building activity, no doubt owing to the fact that in most towns the Muslims had either divided or taken complete possession of the principal church. In Mesopotamia, however, conditions were different, for two new towns, Basra and Kufa, had been founded, and it was here apparently that Muslim architecture really began to make progress under Ziyad Ibn Abihi, who was appointed governor of Basra in 665.³⁰

Ziyad, who was well acquainted with the turbulent spirit of the cities of Iraq, thoroughly realized the political importance of the mosque, that dominating position in which was concentrated at that time the political and social life of the Arab Empire. At the same time he felt that the masjids of the tribes were a danger to him, hence his anxiety to embellish and enlarge the Great Mosque, so that by its splendor and proportions it would eclipse the tribal masjids and attract all to it.³¹

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 5-6

³⁰ Ibid., p. 12

³¹ Ibid., pp. 12-13

It can, therefore, be observed that Creswell had interpreted the concept of the mosque in a progressive development judged according to its aesthetic criteria and its function as a place of ritual. He firstly emphasised that the mosque, in its early state of development was similar to a Roman Forum where aside from the religious function of prayers it was also used for many other secular activities.³² The more important purpose of the mosque as a dominant political symbol was quoted before in the case of the governor Ziyad Ibn Abihi. Throughout the book Creswell argued that the mosque was a house of worship similar to that of a church but with a different set of devotional rituals. He argued his position by using the art of the Moslem coinage and the adaptation of Christian paintings and ornaments into Islamic subject matters. He went as far as dismissing the controversial aspects of paintings in mosques as a product of Jewish influence, Semitic anti iconoclastic perception of the primitive Arabs and on the orthodox puritan Muslim scholars who he felt had used the *ḥadīths* as a weapon against the art of painting. Although most of the discussion centred around the controversial aspects of representation, this had a bearing on architecture as it was implied that all art form including architecture was accepted by the early Muslims and the reaction against them was a unique and separate affair.³³

Jairazbhoy's Outline Of Islamic Architecture is a survey of the history and meanings of Islamic Architecture in the Muslim world. He had not provided a clear definition of architecture but from many of the statements in his book he clearly subscribed to a specific conception of architecture as a significant visual product of a civilised culture of which Islam, in the age of the Prophet and his Companions, were never a part of.³⁴ Jairazbhoy's interpretation of the mosque was directly related to his belief that Islam was a cultural revolution.³⁵ This view, therefore,

³² Ibid., p. 12

³³ Ibid., p 97

³⁴ R.A. Jairazbhoy An Outline Of Islamic Architectre (London Asia Publishinh House, 1972) p.1

³⁵ 'By and large only that which is representative of its age , or architecturally new and significant, is brought into discussion, and wherever possible interpreted in the light of its symbolic, practical, aesthetic or psychological motivation. Side by side with the attempt to define the individual styles precedence is given to problems of origin and influence , so as to clarify what strands went into their

led the author in searching for socio-cultural continuities in mosque architecture from the past civilisation of the Jews, Christians and Greeks. He mentioned that the Ka'ba in Makka was selected by the Prophet because the form of the cube alluded to the Jewish temple of Solomon.³⁶ With regards to the orientation of the mosque, he mentioned that it was a natural phenomenon among religious societies such as the Greeks, Egyptians and Christians who had their temples, tombs and churches oriented in a particular direction.³⁷ By this strong association of the mosque as a building possessing a similar spirit with tombs, temples and churches, the author has shown his preconceived notion of the mosque purely as a house of worship. He reinforced this concept of the mosque by directly implying that the initial shape of the hypostyle mosque was taken from the Pre-Islamic temple of Hugga at Yemen.³⁸ Although the author described the mosque in the early times as the centre of communal activities, he associated this building use to that of the Sumerian temples where secular activities occur in the courtyard in full view of the temple sanctuary.³⁹ With regards to the character of the mosque, the author had described it as follows;

Any religious reform in its first fervor is accompanied by self denial and moderation. In domestic building in Islam we see this exemplified by the attitude of the Caliph Omar when he gave permission for the rebuilding of Kufa in stone after the houses of reed had been gutted by fire . He imposed a limit of no more than three houses per family, and also a limit of height which he defined as "what does not lead you to wastefulness, and does not take you away from purposeful moderation". Tabari has a somewhat different account. He says that the Governor Saad Ibni Abi Waqqas built a superb palace at Kufa on the model of the white palace of Madain whose door he also appropriated. Omar learning of this matter sent an envoy to burn the palace with the rebuke that Saad was following the errors of Kesra and

making , and to give full credit for the permanence of their ideas. Apart from the deliberate omissions of less inventive buildings of the later years which obviously have no place in such a general survey, the architecture of the peripheral areas is omitted.'

³⁵ Ibid., p. 1

³⁶ Ibid., p. 4

³⁷ Ibid., p. 5

³⁸ Ibid., p. 10

³⁹ Ibid., p. 11

abandoning the principles of the Prophet, Omar added that a single modest house ought to suffice in this world for living, another for depositing and guarding the public treasure.⁴⁰

It can be seen that the consistent argument of the author was that the mosque can be considered as any typical religious building in which its architectural purpose and expression were products of progressive social development. This development was illustrated by the suggestion that in the beginning the mosque was simple in expression, multi-functional in usage because of pure necessity or early religious zeal of moderation. The latter mosque's concerns for aesthetic expression and social worship was a natural development for the building as the Muslim culture 'progressed' ahead into a more sophisticated one. There is, therefore, no room for the Prophet's tradition to even be considered in understanding the architecture of all the mosques in the later times. The author had selected mosques and other buildings which fit this concept of cultural development.

Another popular textbook of Islamic Architecture is John D. Hoag's Islamic Architecture. In this book, he defines Islamic architecture as the product of Muslims at all times in all places.⁴¹ He is also of the opinion that Islamic architecture has its fundamental roots in the Byzantine and Persian civilisation. These opinions would then imply that the mosque worthy of the same classification in Islamic architecture are the ones built by Muslims and based purely on the models of the two civilisations. Hoag further strengthens this criteria of building selection by implying that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) had no capacity to understand the finer aspects of architecture. He is, in fact, echoing the view held by Creswell as stated below;

Ibn Sa'd, in his biography of Muhammad relates a story first told by Abd Allāh Ibn Yazid who visited Medina in 707, when the Prophet's residence was still intact. There Abd Allāh met and talked to a grandson of Muhammad's widows, Umm Salama. She

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 9

⁴¹ J. D. Hoag, Islamic Architecture (London: Faber and Faber, 1989)

had told her grandson that when Muhammad was away on the expedition to Duma in the year 626 she had built an addition to her apartment with a wall of burnt bricks. On his return Muhammad rebuked her, saying "Oh Umm Salama! Verily the most unprofitable thing that eateth up the wealth of a believer is building." This opinion seem to have prevailed among the Arabs toward the period of the Orthodox Caliphate. K.A.C. Creswell has gone so far as to say that Arabia at this time presented "an almost perfect architectural vacuum and the term 'Arab' should never be used to designate the architecture of Islam."⁴²

Among the many *ḥadīths* related to the mosque Hoag has only quoted this particular one without delving deeper into its particular historical context or meanings and interpretation by Muslim scholars and jurists. It is all too clear that the whole body of *ḥadīths* and religious literature are dismissed from offering an opinion on the selection of architectural works pertaining to the elucidation of Islamic architecture.

Having discredited the *ḥadīths* and the Prophet's actions as having no value to the knowledge of the initial conception of the mosque, Hoag supports Jairazbhoy's suggestion that the multi-functional nature of the early mosque was influenced directly from the the architecture of the Roman Forum. Indeed, the very concept of the mosque as a law court, education and people's centre is looked upon as a Western characteristic and not an Oriental one.⁴³ The hypostyle form of the early congregational mosques is said to be, in turn, influenced by the Persian apadana or temple.⁴⁴

One other characteristic of the middle period of mosque architectural history is the romantic interpretations of the religious sources to suggest the purely spiritual intent of the mosque in history. The attempts of past mosque designers to emulate or imitate the church in the interior architectural expressions are given more emphasis than the many functions of the mosque throughout history. The image of the mosque as a Paradisal garden is one of the most common interpretations which will be seen in the other scholars' interpretations.⁴⁵ Another

⁴² Ibid., p. 10

⁴³ Ibid., p. 10

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 8

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 17

favourite interpretation of the mosque which is vastly quoted concerns the quality of interior lighting especially at the *mihrāb* from the use of the Verse of light.⁴⁶

Even though most of the works of architectural history emphasise the analysis of architectural forms, ornaments and construction from the aesthetic perspective, there are some information which could have been quite useful to the present study. These information were usually quoted in the works as mere points of interest without any serious academic agenda. The information includes the variety of functions and planning of mosques and also the intentions of the building patrons. This information can be found in such works as those by Jairazbhoy, Goodwin and the work by Lisa Golombek and David Wilder.

Even though Jairazbhoy's work suffers from the common problems of architectural history along with the other works previously mentioned, it contains some interesting information. Unlike most historians such as Hoag, Creswell or Fergusson who dismiss the Prophet's opinion on buildings as a result of his own personal taste, self denial or cultural ignorance, Jairazbhoy disagreed entirely by quoting several *ḥādīths* about the Prophet's participation in building activities and his encouragement about the building of mosques.⁴⁷ He was one of the first historians to mention some of the functional aspects of the mosque other than that of prayer. He suggested that the function of the *ziyādā* of the mosque of Ibn Tulun as a place for informal activities and that one of the sections of the Cordoban mosque was reserved for women.⁴⁸ He also recorded the fact that the Mosque of Salih Talai in 1160 had been constructed above shops.⁴⁹ Another interesting fact mentioned was that in Bukhara in 1540, the Caliph Abdul Aziz Khan had built 200 ward mosques where each mosque served a village of 30-60 houses.⁵⁰ These are the kinds of information necessary to aid in the development of mosque planning principles. Unfortunately, these facts are mentioned as

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 82

⁴⁷ Jairazbhoy, *An Outline Of Islamic Architecture*, p. 8

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 84 & 147

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 159

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 275

points of interest without any serious effort to interpret their significance.

One of the largest collections of architectural monuments contained in a single work on Islamic Architecture is the two volume work entitled The Timurid Architecture Of Iran And Turan by Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilder.⁵¹

The main purpose of the work was to catalogue 257 buildings comprising of tombs, mosques, *khāns*, *madrasas* and shrines. There is little emphasis in the functions or the general activities of these buildings. Needless to say that as with any work of architecture history, the authors have emphasised the formalistic analysis of aesthetic principles to the exclusion of any other concern. However, the work possesses some interesting information related to the thesis. One of the most interesting contents of the work is the author's documentation of the 'aesthetic criteria' of patrons with regards to the building of royal mosques. The authors have quoted Muslim historical sources which indicate that the patrons of mosques were concerned mainly with the size, height and embellishment of the mosque to rival other previous patrons.⁵² The authors have also recorded that the Western style of grandiose planning principle in siting monuments on isolated locations were not popular among the builders and patrons. Most mosques were built as part of the city's urban fabric to the extent that there was little concern for the treatments of the exterior walls of buildings. On the whole, this monumental undertaking offers little use for the thesis since all of the description of the mosque were made without indicating the activities of these buildings.

Although the title of Geoffrey Goodwin's book is A History Of Ottoman Architecture, his work contains mostly the description of a greater number of mosques than any other building.⁵³ The main aim of the book is to show that the Ottoman architectural style is not a mere decadent agglomeration of the Persian, Byzantine and other styles but a

⁵¹ Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilder The Timurid Architecture Of Iran And Turan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988)

⁵² Ibid., pp. 204-206

⁵³ Geoffrey Goodwin A History Of Ottoman Architecture (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1971)

true architectural style in its own right. The aim of the work thus directs the research into a survey of stylistic development of Ottoman architecture throughout its political period. The mosques are mainly described in relation to their symbolic intentions. Most of the descriptions centre around the use of the mosque as the place of prayer and meditation. Goodwin's book contains some points of interest related to the thesis. He mentions many accounts of the building of royal mosques for other than religious intentions such as for personal glory, as a memorial to a deceased sultan, as a memorial to a son's circumcision ceremony and to commemorate a particular historical event. The concern for grandeur and luxury in the mosques are commonplace during the reign of the Ottoman monarchs.⁵⁴ He has also included some interesting information about the plans of mosque complexes and a description of some of their social functions. Goodwin records the mosque complexes as possessing *tabhanes* or accommodation spaces, places for the poor to obtain nourishment and shelter, hospitals and madrasas for students and teachers. These mosque complexes also contain a garden with the founder's tomb in the area. Another mosque is described as possessing a row of shops as a bazaar to attract the public to the newly constructed mosque which was in a new area of settlement. There are also accounts of mosques built above shops. It is most unfortunate that although many plans of these complexes are included, no attention is paid to the analysis of the use of the spaces and the relationship between them.

It can be observed that although the historians of this period are more mature in the sense that their agendas do not include any strong preference for a stylistic ideal or a suggestion of a continuous progressive development to an ideal Islamic architectural style, the concern for construction, structural and stylistic description outweigh any consideration of the mosque's functions. This fact can be attributed to the accepted idea that the main function of the mosque is merely for the performance of a religious ritual and any social function observed from the literary evidence is merely a point of curiosity or a passing interest. The initial concept of the mosque is mainly related to its presumed precedence of forums and temples instead of a serious

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 135

acceptance of the Prophet's Mosque as a building with an architectural significance in its own right. It simply shows the reluctance to accept the idea that Islam is a complete way of life and not merely tied to spiritual concerns and religious rituals. This view of the Prophet's mosque may also be a result of a progressive idea of religion where the ideal of Islam is seen as a progressive development and not rooted firmly in the initial ideals of the first generation Muslims. Finally, the works lack the emphasis on functions and the relationship of spaces in the mosque to be of any use to the thesis.

2.2.3 The Present Period

More recent studies of architectural history relating to Islamic architecture and the mosque are characterised generally by a more sympathetic and deeper understanding of Islam not only through the extensive use of the primary sources and those of modern Muslim writers on Islam, but also in the acceptance of Islam in its own right as a religion and not as a social reform movement. This view is probably brought about by the exposure of the orientalist's attitudes on the history and culture of Islam through such works as Edward Said's Orientalism and Norman Daniel's Islam And The West: The Making Of An Image. This period is also characterised by a radical shift of the method of architectural history towards a more sympathetic approach to the cultural heritage of the specific buildings and the sampling of buildings to represent the various social strata. However there is still a general attitude that a religious building can only be interpreted within the boundaries of the activities defined as religious rituals. In the case of the mosque, although most of its rituals are better understood, there is complete refusal to accept non-ritualistic activities and principles of community life in Islam which relate to the mosque. This attitude is characterised by the complete segregation of the Islamic way of life at the community level in discussing the functions of the mosque. Historians have concentrated mainly on the relationship between the architectural elements of the mosque such as the meaning of the *manāra*, *mihrāb*, *minbar*, courtyard, domes and others to the religious rituals of Islam. While these historians concentrate on the subjects of the origins, influence and purpose of these elements in the history of Islam, a group of Muslim architectural historians have contributed their inner

perspective of Islam using *Ṣūfī* sources to interpret the meaning of the mosque and its architectural elements.

In his *History Of Architecture*, Kostof advocates an approach which he considers as the 'total context of architecture' and documents architecture not in the usual stylistic, geographic or chronological manner. His treatment of Islamic Architecture falls under two separate chapters. The first describes Islam within the Mediterranean historical context and the second under the chapter of a comparison between Istanbul and Venice as samples of cities in a Europe of a later time. Although Kostof claims to place importance on the social rituals of societies, very little is described of the Muslim culture. He may have described the spiritual aspect of prayer from some authentic *ḥadīth* and understood the difference in ritualistic requirements between the mosque and the church but he still supports the initial conception of the mosque being based on a Roman basilica or forum and does not take into account the other functions of the mosque seriously. These functions are merely suggested to be of necessity in the early days of Islam. The only interesting information provided by this work is his brief analysis of the Ottoman *kulliyya* in the chapter on Istanbul. Kostof maintains that the *kulliyya* is a complex of mosques, *madrassa* and social welfare facilities endowed by the Ottoman sultan and acted as one of the important centres apart from the bazaars, khans and citadels. A *kulliyya* was part of a neighborhood facility that helped to generate social activities and proclaim the Ottoman's social dominance over the residence of other faiths. Kostof also holds the opinion that the *kulliyya* were part of an urban expansion tool to generate new settlement promoting the Islamic way of life. Although this description and analysis are accompanied by plans of the complex with an identification of the spaces there is no further analysis as to the architectural design principles.

Apart from the description and interpretation of mosques in the works of architectural history, there are numerous specific works on Islamic architecture which places great importance on the development and origins of the mosque. Among these works are those by Oleg Grabar and Robert Hillenbrand.

Oleg Grabar is one of the most renowned scholars in Islamic architecture whose importance in the field is due to his critical method of understanding the meanings of the history of architecture in Muslim

civilisation through the interpretation and analysis of Muslim primary sources of religion and history. The works reviewed in this section are contained in the book The Formation Of Islamic Art (1973), his article entitled Art and Architecture in the book The Legacy Of Islam (1974), his article on 'The Architecture of the Middle Eastern City from Past to Present: The Case of the Mosque' from the book Studies In Medieval Islamic Art (1976) and the book The Art And Architecture Of Islam (1987).⁵⁵

In his book The Formation Of Islamic Art, Grabar has attempted to analyse the origin of the mosque from a critical examination of the religious and historical sources of Islam which are the Qur'ān, Al-Hādīth and historical accounts of early Islam. His attitude towards the ḥadīths as a questionable collection of accounts about the Prophet in many ways affect his research into the meaning and origin of the mosque. In this respect, Grabar is repeating and expounding Creswell's criticisms of this source. In this book, the chapter on mosque comes after the chapter on 'Islamic attitudes towards the Art'. His attitude towards the ḥadīths and what constituted architecture can be ascertained in that particular chapter. Grabar places extreme doubts concerning the validity of the ḥadīths as the sacred documentation of the Prophet's life and as one of the important reflection of the feelings and religious attitude of early Islam. He reasons that since these ḥadīths were documented much later than the time of the Prophet, their selective documentation cannot be used as valid sources in identifying the early attitudes concerning art, architecture and the mosque. This attitude towards placing the whole corpus of ḥādīth under suspect is a stand in which he is consistent until the latest work reviewed in this research.⁵⁶

Grabar views that the origin of the mosque cannot be ascertained from the analysis of the early Islamic literary sources of

⁵⁵ Oleg Grabar The Formation Of Islamic Art (London: Yale University Press, 1973), Studies In Medieval Islamic Art (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976), Oleg Grabar and Richard Ettinghausen The Art And Architecture Of Islam: 650-1250 A.D. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1987) and the article 'Art and Arcitecture' in the book The Legacy Of Islam edited by Joseph Schacht and C.E. Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974)

⁵⁶ For Grabar's view on what constituted architecture and his attitude toward the ḥadīth corpus please refer to the chapter on 'Islamic Attitudes Towards Art'.

Qur'ān, Al-Hādith and historical accounts.⁵⁷ His conclusion is not surprising as what he was looking for was a kind of Muslim sanctuary similar to those of other religions. In his analysis of the early religious sources of Islam, he may have been working on a preconceived notion of a 'sanctuary' or he may have decided on a later form of mosque as the ideal model. He, thus, concludes that the mosque as a religious building had evolved after the demise of the Prophet. In this respect he supports the popular theory held by Creswell and Ceatani about the sanctification of the Prophet's house after the death of the Prophet. He describes later models of mosques as the product of the Muslim's concern for a meeting place and as an identity in contrast to those of other societies of different faiths. He is more interested in analysing the meanings and origins of the mosque architectural elements such as the *mihrāb*, *minbar*, minaret and dome.

Although Grabar defends his use of the terms religious and secular architecture in his works as a tool to understand the separate development of these aspects of Islam and emphasises that he was not restricting his choice of buildings based on some ritualistic practices, it is clear from all his work that he has focussed only prayer as the function of the mosque. Although he mentions in various places some other functions of the mosque as a 'civic centre' this facts are merely put forward as part of his theory that the mosque evolved from a multi-functional shelter to a house of worship in its purest form.

To sum up Grabar's view, he believes that the problem of the mosque is directly related to the problem of representation in the art of Islam. In this theory, Grabar maintains that since the problem of symbolic representation had not existed in the time of the Prophet and the early Muslims from the religious perspectives, therefore there was no particular concern to develop a theory or guideline of art and symbolic representation. On the subject of the mosque, Grabar believes that the Muslims at that time had no need of a building such as a sanctuary or a holy place similar in other religious traditions and, therefore, the idea of the mosque as understood in the present parlance was not needed. He is of the opinion that the mosque developed into a

⁵⁷ For Grabar's earliest view of the mosque, please refer to the chapter on 'Religious Architecture' in the same book.

purely religious edifice when there was the need for a house of worship different in identity than those found in the conquered territories and as the meeting place for the entire Muslim population. The mosque is said to have attained its present form and function after the separation between stately matters and religious responsibilities occurred in the 11th century.

Robert Hillenbrand, in his article 'The Mosque in the Medieval Islamic World', attempts a historical development of the meanings of mosques and specifically of the mosque architectural elements such as the *miḥrāb*, *minbar*, *maḥṣūra*, *miḥrāb* dome, minaret courtyard, *qandis* and raised transept. He starts off by emphasising that the main purpose of the mosque was as a prayer space. He describes the Prophet's mosque during his life time as a building with a dual purpose where both the secular and religious functions occur.⁵⁸ Hillenbrand believes that there is no unity in Islam between the sacred and the profane and he justified this claim by saying that the worshipper takes off his shoes upon entering the mosque.⁵⁹ Hillenbrand supports the idea of the 'development' of the Prophet's Mosque from a multi-purpose meeting place into a religious house of worship. He maintains that the mosque was used as a political centre and meeting place for the community because of economic necessity and the Muslim in the time of the Prophet was incapable of building something similar to a town hall. He reinforces this idea of the mosque by citing the Prophet's *ḥadīth* about sanctifying the mosque by disallowing spitting, arguing and the separation of sexes in mosques.⁶⁰

Having stated his position on the initial concept of the mosque, Hillenbrand proceeds to interpret the mosque elements in the dual context of a religious house of worship similar to the Christian cathedrals and of the caliphs' palatial architecture. The *miḥrāb* is interpreted as similar in meaning to the church apse and also as a throne space where the mosque is seen as possessing both the spiritual and

⁵⁸ Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Mosque in the Medieval Islamic World' an article in the book *Architecture In Continuity* edited by Sherban Cantacuzino (New York: Aperture, 1985), p.33-50

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 34

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 35

political power of Islam.⁶¹ This view is supported by the presence of the *minbar* in which it is seen as similar to the pulpit and the throne.⁶² The *maḡṣūra* adds more strength to this image of the mosque where it is seen as a private place of worship by the Caliphs and much associated with the court ceremony of the Byzantine emperors.⁶³ The *miḡrāb* dome is seen as a symbol much similar to the religious and palatial symbols of the Roman Empire.⁶⁴ These are some of the elements of architecture which he has chosen to investigate. When he finally mentions some of the 'secular' functions of the mosque at the very end of the article this information is treated merely as a point of curiosity and there was no thought at all to its possible worth in understanding the idea of the mosque in the history of the Muslim peoples.

The next group of historians discussed in this section present an inner perspective of Islam. As with other historians these Muslim historians also emphasise the discussion on the meaning of the mosque architectural elements from the perspective of the related religious rituals. The works still lack the integrative treatment of the Islamic way of life with respect to its social life and the religious rituals related to the mosque.

Ghazi Izeddin Bisheh has attempted a philological approach in reinterpreting the meaning of the mosque architectural elements such as the *miḡrāb*, *minbar*, domes, minarets, *maḡṣūra* with emphasis on the mosque of the Prophet in Madīna. His thesis, The Mosque Of The Prophet At Medinah Throughout The First Century A.H. With Special Emphasis On The Umayyad Mosque, is an attempt to evaluate the findings and statements of Sauvaget in his reconstruction of the mosque of the Prophet during the Umayyad reign.⁶⁵ Bisheh examines the meanings of architectural elements of the mosque from a philological analysis of Arabic poetry. He was able to present an interesting

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 36-37

⁶² Ibid., pp. 37-38

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 38-39

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 39-40

⁶⁵ Ghazi Izeddin Bisheh, The Mosque Of The Prophet At Medinah Throughout The First Century A.H. With Special Emphasis On The Umayyad Mosque an unpublished Ph.D dissertation (University of Michigan, 1979)

interpretation of the meaning of these elements by referring mainly to their usage in the words, idioms and literary expressions of poetry. The only important information that can be used to support the present study is his brief defense of the controversial fact that the mosque of the Prophet during his lifetime was indeed a mosque contrary to the opinions of Grabar, Caetani and Lammens who have forwarded the theory that the building was a mere shelter that became sanctified as a religious building after the demise of the Prophet through a process of social acceptance. Bisheh argues using three points of contention.⁶⁶ Firstly the *ḥadīth* literature recorded the frequent use of the word mosque in describing the Prophet's residence in Madīna. Secondly the *Qur'ān* specifically refers to several buildings as mosques and that the Prophet's Mosque can be considered as one of these buildings. Thirdly, Bisheh argues against the idea that the Prophet's house was not a mosque because both secular and religious activities had taken place there. He maintains that since Islam integrates all the spiritual and social aspects of life it was natural for the mosque to be used in this manner and that the attempt by scholars to fit the mosque in a preconceived idea of a religious building is unjustified. However, Bisheh seems to suggest that the integration of these aspects of life in the function of the mosque occurs only in the early stage of Islam and does not deal with any aspect of the eternal values of Islam related to the mosque.

Two of the best known Muslim historians of architecture are Titus Burckhardt and James Dickie. Both are Muslim converts and both subscribe to the *Ṣūfī* approach to Islam in their works on Islamic architecture and the mosque. Their works on the meaning of the mosque and its architectural elements are based on the *Ṣūfī* interpretations of the *Qur'ān* and the Sunna and by comparing these elements to those found in Christianity and Buddhism. They have also included the architecture of the tomb mosque to strengthen the mystical idea of the mosque in Islam. They maintain that the mosque is a sacred house of worship with a common architectural essence of spirituality as that of the houses of worship of other religions.

In the Art of Islam and Sacred Art In The East And The West Burckhardt emphasises the meanings and symbols of the mosque in

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 124-128

relation to prayer and meditation.⁶⁷ In both books, he does not accept the Prophet's mosque as possessing the initial concept of the mosque. He maintains that the mosque truly began in a 'second revelation' of Islamic ideas brought out from the culture clash between the primitive Arabs and the Western culture. On the subject of mosques specifically, Burckhardt composes his analysis of the building partly through mystical interpretations of the Islamic rituals, *ḥadīths* and Qur'ānic Verses and partly from the analogy of church architecture. There are several statements which he has made which illustrate the first point. For instance, he refers to the mosque cupola and its pendentives as a symbol of Allāh's Throne being supported by eight angels by his interpretation of the famous Verse of the Qur'ān known as the Āyāt Kursī or Verse of the Throne.⁶⁸ He alludes to the *miḥrāb* as being a 'cave of the world' and more specifically as the cave like prayer niche of Mary's refuge.⁶⁹ The light emanating from the *mihrab's* dome, to him, is the undisputed symbol of the famous Verse of Light in the Qur'ān which describes the many veils between man and the Creator.⁷⁰ The dome itself, he believes is the symbol of the white pearl mentioned in a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet.⁷¹ He interpreted the walls of the mosque which are covered with decoration as the symbol of the veil of God as quoted in the Qur'ān.⁷²

The second aspect of interpretation is his attempt to create a close analogy between the church and the mosque. He firstly compares the *miḥrāb* to the apse.⁷³ In another account he refers to the *miḥrāb* as reminiscent of the choir or an apse or 'the holy of holies'.⁷⁴ Next, he describes the *djāmi'* mosque as a cathedral because it is the only type of mosque where the Friday Prayers and the sermon are held. Finally he mentions the similarity in purpose of the empty canopy of the *minbar* as

⁶⁷ Titus Burckhardt, Art Of Islam: Language And Meaning. (London: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, 1976); Sacred Art In East And West. (Middlesex: Perrenial Books, 1976)

(London: World of Islam Festival Translated by Lord Northbourne.

⁶⁸ Burckhardt, Art of Islam, p.24

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 88

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 91

⁷¹ Ibid., p.91

⁷² Burckhardt, Sacred Art In East And West, p.111

⁷³ Op cit., p.22

⁷⁴ Op cit., p.117

symbolising the presence of the Prophet much like the invisible presence of the Buddha and the Christ in temples and churches.⁷⁵

James Dickie, in his article 'Allāh and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs', is one of the few authors to attempt an explanation of mosque through an analysis of Islamic rituals and their place in the Muslim society. He divides the article into three parts. The first part comprises a discussion on the rituals of Islam related to the mosque, the second concerns the meanings of the architectural elements of the mosque and a description of the types of mosques in the Muslim world.

Dickie concentrates on three Islamic rituals associated with the mosques. The first is circumambulation, prayers and *i'tikāf*. He describes the ritual of circumambulation of the Ka'ba and relates it to the veneration of the tomb of the saints.⁷⁶ He, thus, implies the generalisation of the existence and legitimacy of tomb mosques. Next, he describes prayers as existing on four different levels and associate each level with a particular kind of mosques.⁷⁷ The first level is the individual prayer and the building associated with it is the *masjdjid*. The second level is the congregational Friday Prayers and the building concerned is the *djāmi*'. The third level is that of a city where the *'īdgāh*, which is a field with a *kiblā* wall, serves as the mosque for the two annual 'Īd celebrations. The fourth and final level of prayer is the *hadj* which is a once in a life ritual prayer in the Holy City of Makka at the Al-Masjdjid Al-Ḥarām. He has, therefore, emphasised the function of the mosque as a place for specific types of prayer. He has mixed the different building types such as the *djāmi*' and *'īdgāh* from different cultures in giving a unifying explanation for the different types of prayers. The third ritual he discusses is *i'tikāf*.⁷⁸ He supports the individual act of seclusion in the mosque as an act of piety with precedence from the Christian monastic life and the Prophet's practice prior to the period of revelation. Dickie interprets the dome as the canopy of heaven and reinforces this

⁷⁵ Burckhardt, *Art Of Islam*, p. 91

⁷⁶ James Dickie, 'Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs', an article in the book *Architecture of the Islamic World* edited by George Michell, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978) p. 16

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 35-36

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 40

statement by indicating that the ornament on the dome symbolises the Paradisal Tree.⁷⁹ The ablution fountain is described as having similarity to the church's fountain.⁸⁰ The *minbar* with the empty canopy is interpreted as the symbolic presence of the Prophet similar in purpose to that of signifying the presence of the Buddha in the Buddhist temples.⁸¹ The *dikka* is said to be similar to a choir stall of a church.⁸² The *kursī* is compared to the synagogue's table for the Holy Scroll and where it is used to hold a huge *Qur'ān* for recitation.⁸³

The third part of the article deals with the types of mosques. The ones emphasised are the monastic, tomb and memorial mosques. The monastic mosque is interpreted as having its origin in the Prophet's seclusion and the *i'tikāf* ritual as mentioned before. It is also related to Christian monasteries and monasticism.⁸⁴ The author reinforces his interpretation by describing the atmosphere and the architectural expression of these mosques as similar to that of the Taoist monasteries, Buddhist temples, Russian Orthodox Church and Cistercian Abbey.

Both Burckhardt and Dickie associate the tomb mosque as part of their mystical idea of the mosque in Islam. Although Burckhardt accepts the contradictory nature of tombs in Islam, he still supports the architecture of tombs as a natural and human expression in which the dead would receive the *baraka* or blessings in the prayers of the worshippers.⁸⁵ He misunderstands the Prophet's *ḥadīths* with regards to the rewards and affliction of the dead from the world of the living.⁸⁶ Burckhardt strengthens his support for the legitimacy of tomb mosque by indicating that saints in Islam exist as stated in the *Qur'ānic* Verse 154. He further quotes the Prophet's tomb as a valid precedent for tomb mosque despite the existence of *ḥadīths* which point towards the

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 34

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 35

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 36

⁸² Ibid., p. 37 The author has disregarded the main function of the *dikka* as merely an acoustical and visual tool for the amplification of the *imām's* voice and as a visual aid to the worshippers further in the back rows.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 37

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 40

⁸⁵ Burckhardt, *Art of Islam*, pp. 93-97

⁸⁶ Chapter Five contains a more detailed discussion on this subject.

Prophet's firm stand against the construction of tombs and mosques with tombs.

The practice of building tomb mosques is seen by Dickie as a legitimate act regardless of sectarian differences by quoting a Verse from the Surā Al-Kahf.⁸⁷ This Verse actually refers to a special incident and is never interpreted as legitimising tomb building in Sunnī Qur'ānic commentaries.⁸⁸ The author relates this practice to Christian tomb buildings where the living hope to find God's blessing by having their tombs next to the body of a saint.

The next two works reviewed are those which attempts to identify the planning and design principles of mosques. The earlier of the two works discussed in the following paragraphs uses the theoretical framework of psycho-analytical method of studying the prayer ritual with the intent of unraveling common design principles used in the past mosque to invoke a deep meditative state in the worshipper. The other work is an in-depth study thus far on the interpretation of the meanings of the Bahri Mamlūk mosque using the Şūfī approach of Islam as the framework for analysis.

Osamah Mohammed Noor El-Gohary's Mosque Design In Light Of Psycho-Religious Experience is a pioneering attempt to verify a set of mosque design principles assumed to have been used by mosque designers in the past and in the present in most of the countries in the Muslim world through an analysis of the ritual prayer using the approach of the Psychology of Religion.⁸⁹ El-Gohary provides a psychological explanation for the various aspects of the prayer ritual and the relationship of this finding to the architecture of the mosque. He supports his findings by relating the psychological mechanism of prayer by the various historical and religious literature propounded by Muslim jurists and philosophers. Although the work is valuable in the sense of providing a scientific perspective to the spiritual realm of prayer in Islam and in providing a basis of mosque design principle in terms of siting, spatial planning and embellishments, it offers little help to the present study for several important reasons. Firstly, El-Gohary has

⁸⁷ Op cit., p. 43

⁸⁸ More information on this issue is treated in Chapter Five.

⁸⁹ Osamah Mohammed Noor El-Gohary's Mosque Design In Light Of Psycho-Religious Experience (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Pennsylvania, 1984)

made no attempt at understanding the initial concept of the mosque and merely makes the generous assumption that the mosque is meant for the purpose of prayer only. He stresses the idea that the sole and important function of the architecture of the mosque is to provide a conducive environment which may aid in producing the most 'genuine' prayer. For this purpose all the meditative mechanisms such as isolation, directional focus and contemplative visual pattern production are emphasised in mosque design. Secondly, the work analyses mosques with the exact planning principle and architectural elements suggested in his design principle of mosques without any concern at all for the function of the spaces in relation to other ritual or social activities. Thirdly, the work fails to consider the question of Islam as a way of life which provides certain important social responsibilities and personal value system that stems directly from the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet's *Sunna*. The author has even 'explained' and recommended such negative values as arrogance in building and outward manifestation of wealth as part of an accepted value or characteristic of Islam merely to fit in some psychological premises. The work, on the whole, is a justification for the design principles and intent of most monumental mosque from the elite patronage to the extent of justifying the selfish and arrogant desires of a patron's id, ego or the superego.

One of the most important works on the iconography of mosque architecture is by Aly Gabr in his thesis entitled The Influence Of Traditional Muslim Beliefs On Medieval Religious Architecture: A Study of the Bahri Mamlūk Period.⁹⁰ Gabr has attempted to analyse the design principles used by the builders of the Mamlūk mosque by using the understanding of *Şūfī* rituals and visual symbolism. He was able to suggest a reconstruction in the meanings of the spaces, building forms, architectural elements and decorations as it would have been perceived by the designers, patrons and users of the mosque during that period. This work relates directly to the thesis in two different ways. In the first place the work contains supporting evidences that most of the mosque built in the present time which use indiscriminately elements of the past

⁹⁰ Aly Gabr, The Influence Of Traditional Muslim Beliefs On Medieval Religious Architecture: A Study of the Bahri Mamlūk Period An unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Edinburgh, 1993)

are unjustified because the elements adapted for Sunnī mosques may have inappropriately come from the Ṣūfī design approach. At the same time it opens a new way of interpreting past mosques in the Muslim world which may have been influenced by this design approach. The work indicates that the design of mosque architectural forms, decorations and elements adapted or imitated by present architects from the Mamlūk architecture were meant for people of a different time with different socio-religious concerns. The present problems of mosque in the Sunnī context possesses a different set of socio-religious concerns. The work supports the present study in also stressing that the Mamlūk concept of the mosque contradicts directly the concept of the mosque of the Prophet in his own lifetime. Since the Mamlūk mosque was shown to be designed solely for the performance of prayers, meditation and seclusion it suggests that the initial concept of the mosque of the Prophet was meant more for the social activities of Muslims. However, there is an important controversial point which Gabr has made which we feel contradicts the traditions of the Prophet. In his description of the Prophet's mosque he maintains that the covered part or the *zulla* was sanctified as a place of prayer and, therefore, possessed a sacred quality greater than that of the courtyard.⁹¹ Since he offers no evidence for this statement, it can only be deduced that he has simply regarded that the act of spatial enclosure suggests a differentiation of space brought about by the need of defining sacred territory. Since it has never been proven for certain that all cultures at all periods of history possess this idea of spatial differentiation by physical enclosure, his assumption cannot be taken seriously. It cannot be shown from the *ḥadīths* that the Prophet prefers the enclosed space of the *zulla* to that of the courtyard. This point is important because if it is accepted that the Prophet had made the distinction then it suggests strongly that the space for prayer is a specially sanctified space and in some aspects challenges the importance of social functions of the mosque and further limits the use of the main space of the mosque which was once multi-functional in all aspects.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 135

2.3 Summary and Conclusion

From the above discussion on the interpretations of mosque architecture in the works of architectural history, it can be concluded that they present little value to the thesis. The historians' approaches and agendas towards the study of architecture, Islam and the mosque are a result of their aims and intentions which are different than those of the present study.

It was mentioned in the earlier part of this chapter that it is important to understand the various functions which the mosque has catered for in the past. The problem of architectural history in this respect is that they have either little concern for it or that the discussion of mosque function is restricted only to those defined as 'religious'. In the first instance, historians were mainly interested in the formalistic, aesthetic, structural and constructional aspect of architecture. This focus had resulted in the distinction between mere building and those considered as 'architecture'. This distinction thus influences the selection of buildings that are either 'unique' in its expression or those whose patrons are considered influential and representative of the building users. Furthermore, there are historians who are more concerned about deriving a personal 'taste' of good architecture as a social guide to building appraisal and also those who seek to defend a philosophical stand on the eternal principles or evolutionary form of art. In the second instance, historians under the strong influence of the scientific revolution in the age of enlightenment who views religion as a separate entity confined only to a spiritual realm limit the discussion of the function of the mosque as a symbol of the house of God, as a place of seclusion from the 'materialistic' world and as the place to perform acts of religious rituals and meditation. The historians mostly do not accept the unity of the Islamic religious life in relation to the function of the mosque.

With regard to the problem of determining the Prophet's conception of the mosque, the historians have taken four different positions. The first position is of total rejection of the Prophet's mosque as an early form of Muslim architecture. The historians have chosen to propose that the true initial conception of the mosque occur during the Umayyad caliphate. This position is taken up by the historians with a strong stand on the importance of differentiating architecture from

mere building. The second position is that the Prophet's Mosque was initially a house or a tribal *madjlis* which became sanctified as a mosque after his demise. This position is held by those who possess a preconceived idea of what a 'religious sanctuary' is in Islam. The third position is an acceptance of the Prophet's house as a primitive type of mosque and shelter which then achieves maturity in its architectural form and elements as the religion develops 'progressively' towards its ultimate form in the reign of the Umayyad caliphate. The second and third positions are mostly taken by historians who subscribe to the idea of social progress where Islam is seen to be primitive in its early state contrary to the Muslim belief that the Prophet's era was the golden age of Islam and represents an eternal ideal for Muslims to emulate. The fourth position is that the initial conception of the mosque was a result of the direct influence of the architecture of ancient temples and houses of worship prior to Islam found in the geographical vicinity of Arabia. This view may either have been influenced by the idea of religion as a continuous line of social reform or that there is an accepted eternal idea of a house of worship. All of these positions contradict the Sunnī Muslim's acceptance of the Prophet's mosque as a mosque in all respects.

Concerning the importance of the use and method of interpreting the religious sources within the Sunnī framework of Islam, the historians' positions can be summarised as follows. In the earlier works, the religious sources were totally ignored. However, when they began to be used in the middle and the present period, the sources were either interpreted as historical sources understood purely within a socio-political context or the authors have resorted to the Ṣūfī mystical interpretation unacceptable to the Sunnī perspective of Islam. There are also historians who have attempted to discredit the whole body of *ḥadīths* as an unworthy source of understanding the mosque as it is alleged to be either the personal whims of the Prophet or that the traditionalists represents a reformist movement towards a conservative approach to Islam. These positions are highly unacceptable to Muslims who holds the traditions of the Prophet as sacred.

Finally it was mentioned that the idea of the mosque must be understood within the total context of Islamic rituals and of the Muslim's communal life. All of the historians have understood this aspect as separate entities. They have emphasised only the ritual aspects

and the interpretations of architecture related only to these activities. Although it was shown that in some works of architectural history the historians were aware of the presence of many 'secular' activities in the mosque even from the time of the Prophet, these facts were never given serious notice and treated as points of interest only.

It can thus be surmised that the works of architectural history cannot be used as a source to fulfill the aims of the thesis. The framework for analysing the idea of the mosque provided by the thesis was not used by these historians as they were working under a different set of agendas and assumptions. It is, therefore, necessary to utilise the framework in the discussion of the religious sources of Islam in order to understand the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque. The next four chapters present an effort toward this end.

Chapter Three

THE IDEA OF THE MOSQUE IN THE ẸUR'AN

Introduction

It was concluded in the previous chapter that the works of architectural history possess little value to the approach of the thesis. The final aim of the thesis can only be obtained through a different approach in understanding the meaning of the mosque in Islam. It was explained that the initial conception and eternal idea of the mosque must be identified in order to develop a more meaningful design of the mosque in the modern context. It was also explained that these ideas of the mosque can be obtained through a reinterpretation of the fundamental religious sources of Islam. These sources contain not only the historical information about the origins of the mosque, it also provides an in-depth understanding of the rituals and aspects of the individual and communal life of Muslims related to the mosque. Two of these important sources are the Holy Ẹur'ān and the Al-Ḥadīth. This chapter presents an analysis of the Ẹur'ānic Verses related to the idea of the mosque in Islam. The analysis of the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) *ḥadīths* is dealt with in the next chapter where as the two chapters which follow it deal with the interpretation of the religious rituals and aspects of the communal life of Muslims in relation to the mosque.

The way of life in Islam is built on two fundamental sources. The first and most important source is the compilation of the revealed words of Allāh The Most High repeated verbatim through His last

Messenger, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). This source is known as The Holy Ḳur'ān. The second most important source is the compilation of the deeds, sayings and silent approvals of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). This compilation is known as the Al-Ḥadīth. The Shari'a of Islam must be based on these two sources. Islam cannot be built upon the consideration of only one of them. The Prophet is the model *par excellence* of the *mu'min* or the ideal Muslim in this life. Throughout the age of Islam, Muslim scholars have been using these two sources as their guide in making decisions about life. These decisions are documented carefully to serve as a reference for future Muslim societies. The Muslim society of any age must respect these decisions of the scholars but they are in no way bound to follow them. The Muslim society is only bound by the first two sources and may use the laws and suggestions of the past jurists in guiding them to a decision with regards to matters unique only to their time and place. The *ijtihād* or personal judgements of the past jurists are not binding upon Muslims but they must respect them and be cautious in contradicting their statements. In the interpretation of the two sources the views and opinions of the jurists must be given due consideration and must not be discarded by virtue of its application in another period of history.

The present chapter contains a critical analysis of the Verses of the Ḳur'ān with regard to the idea of the mosque in Islam. The chapter contains three parts. The first part outlines briefly the history of the Ḳur'ān and concentrates mainly on the subjects of its meaning, origin, purpose, compilation and the methodology of Ḳur'ānic *tafsīr* or interpretation. The second part of the chapter consists of a survey of the historical context of the Ḳur'ānic Verses with regards to the ideas of the mosque in Islam. The third part contains an analysis of these ideas in order to ascertain the initial conception and eternal idea of the community mosque in Islam.

3.1 The Holy Ḳur'ān

Ahmad Von Denfeer explains the meaning of the word '*qur'ān*' as follows:

The Arabic word '*qur'ān*' is derived from the root '*qara'a*' which has various meanings, such as to read, to recite etc.. *Qur'ān* is the verbal noun and hence means the 'reading' or 'recitation'. As used in the *Qur'ān* itself, the word refers to the revelation from Allāh in the broad sense and is not always restricted to the written form in the shape of a book, as we have it before us today.

However, it means revelation to Muḥammad only, while revelation to other prophets has been referred to by different names(e.g. *taurāt*, *injīl*, *kitāb*, etc.)¹

According to the same author, the *Qur'ān* is also known by several other names such as the '*furqān*' or criterion, '*tanzīl*' or sent down, '*dhikr*' or reminder and '*kitāb*' or scripture.²

3.1.1 A Brief History of the *Qur'ān*'s Origin

The first revelation of the *Qur'ān* began on the 27th day of the month of *Ramadhān* while the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was practicing seclusion in the cave in one of the hills near the city of Makka. It was reported that an angel came and ordered the Prophet to repeat the revelation after him. This happened when the Prophet was 40 years of age in the year 610 of the Common Era. The *Qur'ān* was not revealed in a single time but was revealed for twenty three years after that incident. The Verses were revealed at different times according to various situations. These situations include incidents such as the answers to the Prophet's many debates with the Jews, Christians and Makkan polytheists, as answers to specific problems posed by the Muslim community, as comfort to the Prophet in times of distress, before the commencement of battles for the faith and many other situations. Whenever the *Qur'ān* was revealed to the Prophet, he would order a Companion, usually Zayid Ibn *Thābit*, to preserve the words in writing because it was known that the Prophet could neither read nor write.

The *Qur'ān* was revealed throughout the first thirteen years of the Prophet's mission in Makka and these Verses are known

¹ Ahmad Von Denffer, '*Ulūm Al-Qur'ān : An Introduction To The Sciences Of The Qur'ān*' (Leicester :The Islamic Foundation, 1983) p.17

² Ibid, p. 18

importantly as the Makkan Verses. The revelation continued throughout the next ten years of the Prophet's time in Madīna.

Although the Verses were revealed at different times under different situations, the Prophet was instructed by the same angel as to the final order of the Verses into Surās and their sequence. It was known through the authentic traditions that the angel frequently came to the Prophet to listen to his recitation in a particular order and there has never been a dispute among the Companions as to the sequence of the Verses or of the Surās.

3.1.2 The Methodology of Ḳur'ānic Tafsīr

The subject of the Ḳur'ān is man and the emphasis throughout the whole book is towards guiding man to the path of success in this life and the life hereafter. The Ḳur'ān contains injunctions, similes, historical examples and arguments about the truth of Allāh's existence, might and wisdom through the invitation to man to use his intellect to rationalise about the remarkable creations of plant life, animal life, planets and others. Throughout his earthly existence in all times, the Muslim must strive to understand the Ḳur'ān for his or her faith and survival. The comprehension of the Ḳur'ān must be performed using the established requirements and method of *tafsīr*. Without the guidelines of this method, the Ḳur'ān can be interpreted in ways that may contradict the very spirit of Islam itself.

There are several requirements that a person doing the *tafsīr* must understand prior to the task of interpreting the Verses of the Ḳur'ān. The first of which is the ability to distinguish between the Makkan and Madīnan Revelations.

The Makkan Verses are characterised mainly by their themes. Maududi mentions that for the first four years of the Prophet's ministry, the Verses revealed were mainly about basic tenets of belief in Islam, comfort for the struggling Muslims and the strengthening of brotherhood among the first Muslims.³ The next nine years of the ministry in Makka saw the Muslims being opposed systematically by the use of various political, social and economic strategies by the Makkan

³ Abul A'la, Maududi, The Meaning Of The Qur'an (Lahore(Pakistan): Islamic Publications Ltd., 1984) Vol. 1 pp. 14-20

leadership. The false accusations on the persons of the Prophet concerning the authenticity of the divine message and the questioning of his very sanity were refuted by the Revelations. The Makkan polytheists were also warned of severe punishments in the hereafter for their extreme deeds.

The Madīnan Verses are characterised by the existence of many rules and laws to govern the social structure of the first Islamic government in Madīna. There are also Verses in abundance that shows the Prophet's debates and arguments with Christians and Jews about many matters such as the nature of the soul, the existence of the Unseen Beings, the miracles of the prophets, the nature of God and the phenomenon of Creation.

The Qur'ānic exegete must also be aware of the knowledge of the context of the situation in which the Verses were revealed.⁴ It was mentioned that the Qur'ān was revealed according to the social needs of the time. It is important to discern which Verses are generally applicable to Muslim at all time and those that explain the specific historical condition of a particular period.

Thirdly, a knowledge of the abrogated Verses in the Qur'ān is also crucial. The Qur'ān may indicate a particular injunction at an earlier time and a later Verse may abrogate the earlier one. This does not indicate any inconsistencies in the Qur'ān because it was seen as necessary to teach the Muslim in stages and not to effect a drastic change in the lives of the early converts.

Finally, an in-depth knowledge of the Arabic language and its meanings in the time of the Prophet is necessary. It is a known fact that language changes in meaning over time and an understanding of the cultural context of the past Arab civilisation is necessary to understand the messages of the Qur'ān.

Having possessed of these requirements, the exegete may interpret using several primary principles.⁵ The first principle of *tafsīr* is the use of the Qur'ān itself in interpreting the Verses. There are Verses that are expounded by many other Verses throughout the Qur'ān. A second principle is the use of *ḥadīths* directly in the interpretation.

⁴ Op cit., pp. 92-113

⁵ Ibid., pp. 123-136

There are numerous authentic *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet clearly clarifies the meanings of the Verses through his deeds and sayings. The third principle is the personal *ijtihād* of the interpreter based upon the *ḥadīths* and opinions of the past scholars. The exegete, at whichever time in history, must consider all these principles before making his own personal interpretation of the Verses.

It is for these reasons that the thesis uses the Qur'ānic exegesis by Abdullah Yusof Ali, Muhammad Asad and Abul A'la Maududi. The works of three exegetes are selected mainly because their *tafsīr* have been accepted as following the principles set up by the Sunnī jurists. Their works are different than the classical works since they interpret the Verses within the context of the modern Muslim society and they are also involved with various works of Islamic reform movement.

3.2 A Survey of the Qur'ānic Verses Related to the Mosque

There are generally three types of Qur'ānic Verses which make references to the idea of the mosque in Islam. The first type concerns the various kinds of mosques where as the second and third types concerns the guardianship and functions of mosques. It is most important to understand the implications of these Verses in order to single out the initial concept of the community mosque. These Verses are analysed and described in the following sub-sections.

3.2.1 The Types of Mosques in the Qur'ān

There are numerous Verses which mention various types of mosques in the Qur'an. The Arabic words which refers to the mosque in the Qur'ān are '*masjid*' or places of prostration, '*bayt*' or house and '*kibla*' or direction. These words are mentioned in different historical and social contexts revealed throughout twenty three years of the Prophet's ministry. These mosques can be classified as the Sacred Mosque, the universal mosque, the tribal mosque, the memorial mosque, and the mosque without a building. The following subsections contain an examination of each mosque type in detail in order to ascertain what the initial concept of the community mosque in Islam was.

3.2.1.1 The Sacred Mosque

Most of the mosque related Verses in the *Qur'ān* refers directly or indirectly to the Ka'ba which is the ancient house of worship believed to have been built by the Prophets Ibrāhīm and his son Ismā'īl (peace be upon them). Among the three most sacred mosques in Islam, the Al-Masjdjid Al-Ḥarām which contains the Ka'ba at its centre is the most sacred one of all. The *Qur'ān* uses the terms '*al-bayt*' which means the house and also the phrase '*masjdjid-al-ḥarām*' which translates as 'the sacred mosque'. In reviewing the Verses relating to this mosque, the *Qur'ān* emphasises several political, historical, ritualistic and symbolic aspects of the Sacred Mosque.

The Ka'ba is considered sacred mainly through its historical and ritualistic associations. The nature of its sanctity can be observed from the Verses containing its historical origins and ritualistic purposes:

"Behold, the first Temple ever set up for mankind was indeed the one at Bakkah: rich in blessing, and a source of guidance unto all the worlds, full of clear messages. (It is) the place whereon Abraham once stood: and whoever enters it finds inner peace. Hence, pilgrimage unto the Temple is a duty owed to God by all people who are able to undertake it. And as for those who deny the truth - verily, God does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds."⁶

"And Lo! We made the Temple a goal to which people might repair again and again, and a sanctuary : take, then, the place whereon Abraham once stood as your place for prayer. And thus did We command Abraham and Ishmael: Purify My Temple for those who will walk around it, and those who will abide near it in meditation, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves (in prayer)."⁷

The Verses allude to the history of the building of the Ka'ba by the Prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl (peace be upon them). Ali mentions that the

⁶ Muhammad Asad, *The Message Of The Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus, 1980) Surā 3, Verses 96-97, pp. 81-82

⁷ Ibid., Surā 2, Verse 125, pp. 26-27

Verses refers to the importance of the Ka'ba as the place of assembly for the Arabs where they used to gather every year to worship and trade. It was the most sacred place of pilgrimage to the pre-Islamic Arabs and it is located in the Sacred Precinct where the Arabs uphold the ancient tradition of prohibiting the killing of human and animal lives.⁸ The Verses also contain descriptions of some of the rites and rituals with regard to the Sacred House such as the *ṭawāf* or circumambulation around the Ka'ba.

The sanctity of the Ka'ba and the area around it in Makka is considered as the Sacred Precinct from the Verses and historical incidents of the prohibition against visits to the Ancient Temple by unbelievers as in the following Qur'ānic proclamation:

"O you who have attained to faith! Those who ascribe divinity to naught beside God are nothing but impure: and so they shall not approach the Inviolable House of Worship from this year onwards. And should you fear poverty, then (Know that) in time God will enrich you out of His bounty, if He so wills: for, verily, God is all-knowing, wise!"⁹

The Verse was revealed and read aloud to the unbelievers a short period after the liberation of Makka from the polytheists. From that day until the present time Makka was made free from any non-Muslim visits. The sacred area is not only prohibited to non-Muslims, the area surrounding the Ka'ba is declared holy and no desecration of its life forms are tolerated. Maududi has interestingly concentrated on the issue of what denotes the 'Sacred House' or the 'Inviolable House of Worship' which most commentators ascribe to the Ka'ba building.¹⁰ Maududi discusses at great length about the controversy over the meaning of this phrase. One school of thought subscribes to the above opinion where as another believes that the phrase refers to the whole city of Makka. The second opinion derives from the rationale that the pilgrimage rites include visits to many places in Makka and not only the Ka'ba. There are also several

⁸ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an: Translation And Commentary (Maryland (USA): Amana Corporation, 1983) p.52

⁹ Asad, Surā 9, Verse 28, p.261

¹⁰ Maududi, Vol. 7, pp.195-196

ḥadīths of the Prophet which he had quoted to reinforce the idea that Makka should belong to all Muslims and none of the houses or facilities in the Holy City must be used to generate personal profit. The spirit of the *ḥadj* is not to provide a permanent income for the inhabitants of the city but the unity of the brotherhood of Muslims.

The sanctity of the Ka'ba is directly related to the ritual pilgrimage of *ḥadj* where a Muslim is required to perform at least once a life time if he or she is well disposed to perform it. The sanctity of the Ka'ba is also associated with the historical change of the *kibla* from Jerusalem to Makka as indicated in the following Verses:

"We have seen thee(O Prophet) often turn thy face towards heaven(for guidance): and now We shall indeed make thee turn in prayer in a direction which will fulfill thy desire. Turn, then, thy face towards the Inviolable House of Worship; and wherever you all may be, turn your faces towards it(in prayer). And, verily, those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime know well that this (commandment) comes in truth from their Sustainer; and God is not unaware of what they do."¹¹

Before this revelation, the Muslims were commanded by the Prophet to pray in the direction of the Jewish Holy Temple at Jerusalem. The purpose was to indicate the unity of the Semitic religions. But when the Jews and Christians rejected the message and reminder, Allāh The Most High had given the command to change the *kibla* to the 'Ancient Temple of Abraham' as a signifier that Islam represents the true pure faith of Abraham and that the leadership of mankind has changed from the Christians and Jews to the Muslims.¹²

¹¹ Asad, Surā 2, Verse 144, pp. 30-31

¹² The Verse is part of the discourse which the Prophet had with the Jews when the command for the change of the *kibla* was revealed. The Jews protested the change and argued for the greater sanctity of the temple of Jerusalem. The revelation presents a counter argument to the statements of the Jewish community and stated clearly the importance of Ka'ba as the oldest Temple of God built by the very hands of two of the most revered of Prophets' Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il (peace be upon them). Maududi adds that the sanctity of the Ka'ba is increased with the incident that occurred before the birth of Muḥammad, the Last Messenger. A Christian King from Yemen by the name of Abraha had set out on a war expedition aimed at destroying the Ancient Temple. He wanted to destroy the Ka'ba so that his great church in Yemen can be the only centre of pilgrimage and trade unrivalled in the territory. The Arab tribes which had included the tribe under the leadership of the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) grandfather, Abdul Muṭṭalib, had failed to stop his advance. However, when the war party of the invaders was at the very outskirts of Makka, the great beast that carried Abraha would not move because of a mysterious force. The whole war party was stopped dead in its track. A flock of birds or flying creatures came in the millions and bombarded the invaders with a strange kind of stone

It is important at this time to emphasise that the Ka'ba and the Al-Masjdjid Al-Ḥarām is a unique form of mosque idea. It is more associated with the idea of the 'sacred mosque' rather than any other type of mosque. The historical associations with the prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him), the prohibition against visits by unbelievers, the special sanctity of the area surrounding the Ka'ba and the pilgrimage ritual, cannot be replicated in any other mosque. The Ka'ba is the only *qibla* for all mosques in the world. The same is true for its pilgrimage ritual since it is specific only for the Ka'ba. Although certain sects in Islam encourages pilgrimages to 'holy' sites, mosques and mausoleums of their dead *imāms* and saints, there is no such requirement in the Sunnī practice of Islam. For all intents and purposes the Al-Masjdjid Al-Ḥarām can be considered as a temple if by that it is meant as a building which houses a sacred object. Although the prophet Ibrāhīm, Ismā'il and Muḥammad (peace be upon them) prayed in the Ka'ba, the Muslims until the present day pray outside and around this sacred building in what is now the biggest mosque in the Muslim world.

The Qur'ān also mentions the Sacred Mosque in connection with political events as exemplified by the Verses relating to the Ḥudaybiyya Treaty and the declaration of war on the polytheists. The Verses concerning the declaration of holy war are as the follows:

"And slay them wherever you may come upon them, and drive them away from wherever they drove you away - for oppression is even worse than killing. And fight not against them near the Inviolable House of Worship unless they fight against you there first; but if they fight against you, slay them: such shall be the recompense of those who deny the truth."¹³

The Arab tribes even before the coming of Islam, had a mutual agreement among themselves that there was to be no fighting and killing near the Sacred Temple of Ibrāhīm and in Makka during the months held sacred. The Muslims were commanded by Allāh The Most High to

that resulted in the destruction of the army. The King fell dead in the retreat. The story is told vividly in the Surā Al-Fill (The Elephant) in the Qur'an. This incident symbolised to the Muslim of the eternal sanctity of the City of Makka which houses Allah's Temple and as the birth place of the Final Messenger of God.

13 Asad, Surā 2, Verses 190-191, p.41

respect this ancient custom but with the condition that if they were prohibited or antagonised in any way by any party, they were allowed to fight and kill even if the battle took place in the holy months and in the sacred precincts of the Ka'ba. This is because Islam does not tolerate human oppression of any kind and do not believe in the absolute sanctified condition of any object or act that is unchanged when a particular situation arise that necessitate an action to ratify an injustice.

Finally there was the occasion after the liberation of Makka where the final ultimatum against any polytheist was given by the Prophet to purify Makka of unbelievers.

"How could they who ascribe divinity to aught beside God be granted a covenant by God and His Apostle, unless it be those (of them) with whom you (O believers) have made a covenant in the vicinity of the Inviolable House of Worship?(As for the latter) so long as they remain true to you, be true to them: for verily, God loves those who are conscious of Him." ¹⁴

Both Ali and Maududi relates that the Verse refer to the two tribes of Arabia who had made a covenant with the Muslims and sealed them with an oath at the Ancient Temple. ¹⁵ The Verse is an issue of ultimatum to the other tribes but also a reminder to the Muslims to honour the treaties which they have made in the name of Islam.

There are two separate ideas of what the mosque is in relation to the Qur'ānic Verses about the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'ba. The first idea concerns the concept of sanctity and the other relates to the political function of the mosque. It was explained that the idea of the sanctity of the mosques in the Verses about the Ka'ba is true only to that particular building and cannot be replicated or associated with any other building in Islam. The initial concept of the community mosque hence cannot be derived from this aspect of the building. However, the Ka'ba was mentioned directly in connection to important political events which was party to the changes in the history of Islam. The Ka'ba and the Sacred Precinct had been the scene of the declaration of wars and the signing of treaties and covenants. More of this functions will be related

¹⁴ Asad, Surā 9, Verse 7, pp. 256-257

¹⁵ Maududi, Vol. 4, p. 176

in the following chapters where most social and political events had taken place in the Sacred Mosque near the Ka'ba. It can thus be suggested that the idea of the mosque in performing an important political function is derived directly from the Sacred Mosque itself.

A final point must also be stated that there is very little emphasis on the Ka'ba as a piece of symbolic architecture. The Qur'ān does not mention any mystical meanings or magical properties of the Ka'ba itself or anything concerning its 'ideal' primordial form. Islam does not believe in the overriding sanctity of an object for its own sake.

3.2.1.2 The Universal Mosque

What is meant by the term 'universal' in this section is that the mosque refers to a general type of religious building. The word *masjid* is used to refer to many types of houses of worship. There are four places where the Qur'ān alludes to the various types of 'mosque' or religious building.

One of the group of Verses which use the word 'mosque' in describing other than the Muslim prayer place is regarding the *Masjid-al-Akṣā* or the 'Furthest Mosque' as in the following Verses:

"Limitless in His glory is He who transported His servant by night from the Inviolable House of Worship (at Makka) to the Remote House of Worship (at Jerusalem) - the environs of which We had blessed - so that We might show him some of Our symbols: for, verily, He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing."

"(And We said): "If you persevere in doing good, you will but be doing good to yourselves; and if you do evil, it will be (done) to yourselves." And so when the prediction of the second (period of your iniquity) came true, (We raised new enemies against you, and allowed them) to disgrace you utterly, and to enter the Temple as (their forerunners) had entered it once before, and to destroy with utter destruction all that they had conquered."¹⁶

The word *masjid* is translated in the Verses as the 'Remote House of Worship' and the 'Temple'. At the time of the revelation, there is no Muslim mosque or any building that can be attributed to the Muslims for

¹⁶ Asad, Surā 17, Verses 1-7, pp.417-419

the simple reason that the Islamic world had yet to reach Jerusalem. What, then, can the Verse refer to? Firstly, the commentators are in agreement that it might refer to the ancient Temple of Solomon which was destroyed by the enemies of the Jewish people. The word '*masdjid*', in this respect, is used to refer to a house of worship belonging to the Jews. The Verse may also refer to the 'mosque' as the place of prayer where the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) had prayed together with the other prophets (peace be upon them) in the history of the Semitic religion on his Miraculous Ascent and Journey. Although the incident might have been a mystical experience, the fact that the prayer was performed may indicate the sacredness of the ground as the 'furthest mosque'.

The second place where the mosque is used to refer to a house of worship is the Verse in which the prophet Mūsā (peace be upon him) was commanded to turn some of the Israelites' houses into a place where they can worship and congregate to learn about the Divine Message:

"And (thus) did We inspire Moses and his brother: " Set aside for your people some houses in the city, and (tell them), turn your houses into places of worship, and be constant in prayer!" And give thou (O Moses) the glad tiding (of God's succor) to all believers."¹⁷

In the Verse quoted above, the word which suggests an idea of a house of worship is *kibla*. The literal meaning of the word *kibla* is 'direction' and this word is presently used in Islam mainly to mean the direction towards Makka for the performance of prayer. The context of the Verse above is about the struggle of the Israelites in Mūsā's (peace be upon him) time. Maududi mentions that before the Israelites were given safe passage out of Egypt by the Pharaoh, the prophet Mūsā had to stay in Egypt for a considerable time.¹⁸ He was commanded by God to convert some of the Israelite's residences as a house of worship for him to teach the commands of God. The Pharaoh had outlawed the building of Jewish temples to avoid a strong unification of the Israelites.

¹⁷ Ibid., Surā 10, Verse 87, p. 305

¹⁸ Maududi, Vol. 5, p. 54

The third place where the mosque is associated with other forms of houses of worship is the grouping of the word *masdjid* together with churches, synagogues and monasteries:

"Permission (to fight) is given to those against whom war is wrongfully being waged - and, verily, God has indeed the power to succor them -: those who have been driven from their homelands against all rights for no other reason than their saying, " Our Sustainer is God!" For if God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, (all) monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques - in (all of) which God's name is abundantly extolled - would surely have been destroyed (ere now). And God will most certainly succor him who succors His cause: for, verily, God is most powerful, almighty."¹⁹

The most suggestive part of the Surā is the grouping of the mosque with churches, monasteries and synagogues. Is this meant to suggest the total similarity of the nature of the houses of worship in all religions? The commentators do not think that this is suggested at all. Ali merely mentions that what was meant was the struggle of Islam is the struggle between the forces of monotheism against that of polytheism.²⁰ If Islam failed in the struggle, all the monotheistic religions will crumble too. Asad stresses even further that the fate of the religious life depended entirely on the outcome of the Muslims' struggle against the forces of atheism and polytheism.²¹ The word '*masdjid*' , it seems, may stand for the word 'religion' in this particular case.

It should be emphasised that none of the commentators has taken the suggestion that the mosque of Islam be similar in any respect to the purposes of these buildings. They have opted to interpret the grouping as an indication of the word 'religion' or the struggle of monotheistic belief against polytheism. Why is that Allāh The Most High mentions only these buildings and not any others such as the temples of Buddhism and Hinduism? The answer is obviously that the Arabs at that time may have not been aware of the existence of these buildings and religions. The fact that the Verses exclude the temples of

¹⁹ Asad, Surā 22, Verses 39-40, p.512

²⁰ Ali, p. 862

²¹ Asad, p.512

Zoroastrism and those of the Greeks or Romans indicate that the concern here is only that of the religions which worship only a single deity. What then is Islam's opinion with regards to the buildings mentioned in the Verse? Islam tolerates the existence of these buildings. Islam regards the people who worship in these buildings and who are not antagonistic towards the Muslims as part of the family of Ibrāhīm and that is why in the concept of the Islamic state, their presence is allowed. Muslims believe that the followers in the religion of Christianity and Judaism who are sincere seekers of the truth without the evil and self interested motives of the priesthood of both religions are those to be respected by the Muslims. That is why the Muslim male is allowed to marry the women of both religions without necessitating their conversion to Islam. That is also why these buildings and the worshippers in them are safe from the sword of Islam in the Holy Wars. In one of the Verses, the *Ḳur'ān* records Allāh's reminder to the Christians that the extreme acts of monasticism is not a practice that is encouraged but the monks who are sincere seekers of truth and who have secluded from the corruption of their society and religion are treated well by the Muslims. It can be observed that though Islam is tolerant of what the buildings represents, the mosque in Islam cannot be said to be similar in any way.

The fourth place where the *Ḳur'ān* alludes to a general type of house of worship is in the following Verses:

"Hence, who could be more wicked than those who bar the mention of God's name from (any of) His houses of worship and strive for their ruin, (although) they have no right to enter them save in fear (of God) ? For them, in this world there is ignominy in store; and for them in the life to come , awesome suffering." ²²

The Arabic word for mosque mostly used in the *Ḳur'ān* is '*masjid*' which literally means 'the place of prostration'. Maududi mentions that this Verse was a reminder to the Muslims at Madīna concerning the incidents in Makka during the early and difficult days of Islam. ²³ This was when the Muslims were few in number and the *Ḳuraysh*, of whom the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was a family member, had

²² Ibid., Surā 2, Verse 114, page 24

²³ Maududi, p. 103

prohibited their brethrens to pray at the Ancient Temple of Ibrāhīm. However, Asad offers a general interpretation of the Verse and suggests that the Muslims have a great responsibility of protecting all houses of worship from being desecrated by anyone.²⁴ He refers to the incident of the Christian deputation from Najran who came to debate with the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the Madīna mosque and they were allowed to pray at that place even though the Prophet had made it clear to all that the Christian 'worship' of their priests and saints was against the principles of Islam.

From the previous discussion, there are only two conclusions which relate to the idea of the mosque in Islam. The first is that there is undoubtedly a building type specifically meant for the Muslim form of worship. This conclusion can be drawn from the Verses mentioned in the third place of this section where the word mosques is separated from the words monasteries, synagogues and churches. The second conclusion relates to the nature or character of this new building type. The Verses concerning the 'furthest mosque' can only be interpreted as describing the idea of the 'sacred mosque' as the Temple of Jerusalem alluded to was the most sacred building to the Jews quite similar to what the Ka'ba means to the Muslims. This cannot be used as the basis for the idea of the community mosque sought in the thesis. However, the description of the Jewish houses of worship in the time of the prophet Mūsā (peace be upon him) relates to the concept or idea of a centre of political movement as suggested by Maududi since these simple houses were set up in the midst of the struggle against the Egyptians and can hardly be interpreted as a 'holy building' in the same sense as the Temple of Jerusalem. Finally the Verse which alludes to 'all houses of worship' mentioned in the final part of this section suggests some form of ritualistic similarity in the mosque as in all the monotheistic religious buildings because the phrase 'where Allāh's name is mentioned' can be interpreted as part of a ritual practice. Thus the characteristic of this building type can be interpreted to consist of some form of rituals and as a political centre. There is no way of determining which of the two is more important.

²⁴ Asad, p. 24

3.2.1.3 The Tribal Mosque

In the *Qur'ān* there is only one group of Verses that suggests the existence of a special communal gathering place for both ritual and political functions. Ironically, the Verses refers to the 'opposition mosque' of the enemies of Islam. The Verses explains the conditions of a special mosque set up by Muslim hypocrites who were planning the downfall of the Prophet

And (there are hypocrites) who have established a (separate) house of worship in order to create mischief, and to promote apostasy and disunity among the believers, and to provide an outpost for all who from the outset have been warring against God and His Apostle. And they will surely swear (to you O believers), " We had but the best of intentions!" - the while God (Himself) bears witness that they are lying.

Never set foot in such a place! Only a house of worship founded, from the very first day, upon God-consciousness is worthy of thy setting foot therein- (a house of worship) wherein there are men desirous of growing in purity: for God loves all who purifies themselves.

Which, then, is the better: he who has founded his building on God-consciousness and (a desire for) His goodly acceptance-or he who has founded his building on the edge of a water-worn, crumbling, river bank, so that it (is bound to) tumble down with him into the fire of hell?

For God does not grace with His guidance people who (deliberately) do wrong: the building which they have built will never cease to be a source of deep disquiet in their hearts, until their hearts crumble to pieces. And God is all-knowing, wise.²⁵

The context of the Verses are outlined clearly in Asad's explanations:

Ever since his exodus from Makka to Medina the Prophet was violently opposed by one Abu Amir("The Monk"), a prominent member of the Khazraj tribe, who had embraced Christianity many years earlier and enjoyed a considerable reputation among his compatriots and among the Christians of Syria. From the very

²⁵ Ibid., Surā 9, Verses 107-110, pp. 280-281

outset he allied himself with the Prophet's enemies, the Makkan Quraish, and took part on their side in the battle of Uhud(3 H). Shortly thereafter he migrated to Syria and did all that he could to induce the Emperor of Byzantium, Heraclius, to invade Medina and crush the Muslim community once and for all. In Medina itself, Abu Amir had some secret followers among the members of his tribe, with whom he remained in constant correspondence. In the year 9 H. he informed them that Heraclius had agreed to send out an army against Medina, and that large scale preparation were being made to this effect (which was apparently the reason for the Prophet's preventive expedition to Tabuk). In order that his followers should have a rallying-place in the event of the expected invasion of Medina, Abu Amir suggested to his friends that they build a mosque of their own in the village of Quba , in the immediate vicinity of Medina(which they did), and thus obviate the necessity of congregating in the mosque which the Prophet himself had built in the same village at the time of his arrival at Medina . It is this "rival" mosque to which the above Verse refers. It was demolished at the Prophet's orders immediately after his return from the Tabuk expedition. Abu Amir himself died in Syria shortly afterwards.²⁶

As was explained previously this particular mosque was set up purposely by the hypocrites to aid the enemies of Islam against the Muslims. Even though the intention is evil, the fact is clear that the mosque in this case is one with the sole purpose of a political movement. The Verses in the Qur'ān and the commentators had not indicated that the followers of this mosque had practised the rituals in Islam which were contrary to the accepted ones. The Prophet had destroyed the mosque solely on the basis of its threat as a political institution. Since it is known at that time that the mosque of the Prophet in Madīna is also the political and gathering centre of the Muslims, these two situations point the purpose of the mosque to other than merely as a place of ritual worship.

The hypocrites had not established the mosque to rival the mosque of the Prophet in its physical form such as Abraha was alleged to have done for his church in Yaman designed in great splendor to outshine the architecture of the Ancient Temple of the Arabs, the Ka'ba. The hypocrites had also not built the mosque to rival the Muslims in

²⁶ Asad, p.281

ritual worship of a different kind because Maududi had reported that they had invited the Prophet to pray at their mosque in order to 'sanctify' the place as one of the mosque's of the Prophet. It was reported that the Prophet was uneasy and had refused with the excuse that he was too busy preparing for the Tabuk War campaign. The hypocrite's mosque was the centre of the hypocrite's social influence and political strength. The mosque was constructed solely to be a rival to the Prophet's Mosque at Madīna.

From this perspective the initial concept of the mosque in Islam approaches that of a political centre.

3.2.1.4 The Memorial Mosque

The Qur'ān mentions a type of building that can be called a memorial building as a translation to its use of the word '*masdjid*'. It can be found in Surā Al-Kahf. This Surā contains three historical accounts with the main theme of illustrating the great power of Allāh The Most High in bending the so called 'laws of nature'. In Islam, this secular phrase stands simply as the physical laws created by Allāh to govern the whole universe. Allāh The Most High stands above this law and He is able to bend them to His Will. One of these historical accounts illustrates Allāh's ability to transcend the 'laws of nature'. The story is about the Seven Sleepers who slept for more than two centuries and survived as a testament to Allāh's promise that He is able to raise the dead and that the act of resurrection is not a falsehood:

"And in this way have we drawn (people's) attention to their story, so that they might know-whenever they debate among themselves as to what happened to those (Men of the Cave) - that God's promise (of resurrection) is true, and that there can be no doubt as to (the coming of) the Last Hour. And so some (people) said: "Erect a building in their memory; God knows best what happened to them." Said they whose opinion prevailed in the end: "Indeed, we must surely raise a house of worship in their memory!"²⁷

²⁷ Ibid., Surā 18, Verse 21, p. 442

Maududi relates the full account of the story in his *tafsīr*. The Verses quoted can only be understood with a brief account of the story. This Verse has been used by James Dickie in illustrating the 'proof' that Islam allows the building of tombs, tomb-mosques and mausoleums much like those of other religions.

An influential body of opinion in Islam has all but convinced the 20th century that there is something inherently wicked in tombs, but such a belief finds no support in the Qur'an. In Sura xviii, 21, for instance, we read *a propos* the Seven Sleepers: 'In like manner We disclosed to them that they might know that the promise of Allāh is true, and that, as for The Hour, there is no doubt concerning it. When they (the inhabitants) disputed of their (i.e. the seven Sleepers) case amongst themselves they said: "Build over them a building; their Lord knows best concerning them" Those who won their point said: "Indeed we will build a mosque over them." '28

Dickie has used his personal interpretation of the Verse without consulting the sources of *tafsīr* or *ḥadīth* related to the issue of tomb building in Islam. It is important to establish firstly the context of the story in order to have a clearer view of the issue.

Maududi relates that the incident occurred in the third century of the Christian ministry in a place which was a province of the Roman Empire.²⁹ The Emperor of Rome was persecuting the Christians and when in a certain village, seven youths professed the faith of Christianity, their lives were threatened. The seven youths escaped and hid in a cave where they slept to rest their weary bodies. When they awoke, one of them was sent to obtain some food into town. The youth who was sent was surprised by the strange changes that occurred and was even more surprised to find that Christianity was tolerated and that a Christian Emperor reigned at that time. Maududi mentioned that although the Romans had professed belief in Christianity they were still idol worshippers at heart and could not bring themselves to totally accept the Christian dogmas, one of which was about the concept of

²⁸ James Dickie, 'Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs' in Architecture Of The Islamic World edited by George Michell, (New York: William Morrow and Co. Inc., 1978), p. 43

²⁹ Maududi, pp. 11-15

Resurrection. When the inhabitants found out that the youths were the legendary ones that disappeared more than two centuries ago, they flocked to pay their respects at the cave. A great debate ensued about the significance of the Miracle. Finally, a decision was made to create a tomb for the Seven Sleepers who shortly after their exposure to the public had retreated into the cave and died. As was stated before, the fact that a tomb was constructed was taken by some scholars as a form of encouragement for Muslims to build private tombs. Of this matter, Ali has commented as follows:

The perversity of man is such that as soon as ever a glimpse of truth becomes manifest, men fall into controversies over it. The Sleepers could not judge about the duration of their stay in the Cave, but they wisely left the matter and attended to the urgent business of their lives. The townsfolk could not agree as to the significance of the event: they fell to discussing immaterial details. What sort of memorial should they raise? -a house or a place of worship or a tablet? The place of worship was built. But the real significance of the spiritual meaning was missed until explained in the Qur'an.³⁰

Maududi presents a clearer and more forceful interpretation with regards to this matter:

The people "who prevailed in their matter" were the Roman rulers and the priests of the Christian Church, who did not let the righteous Christians have their way. This was because by the middle of the fifth century, the common people, especially the orthodox among the Christians, had become fully involved in 'shirk' and the worship of saints and tombs. They used to visit the tombs of the saints to worship them and kept the statues of Jesus, Mary and the apostles in their churches: so much so that a few years before the rising up of the Sleepers of the Cave, in 431 A.D., a great council of the representatives of the Christian world had been held in Ephesus itself, in which it was resolved that the creed of the divinity of Christ and of Mary as the Mother of God, should be included in the articles of the Christian Church. If we keep in view of the year 431, it becomes clear that by "those who prevailed in their matter" are meant the leaders of the Church and the officers of the government, who had the reins of the religious

³⁰ Ali, p.735

and the political powers in their hands. In fact these were the people who were the upholders of 'shirk' and who decided that a mausoleum be built over the cave of the Sleepers to make it a place of worship.

It is an irony that some people among the Muslims have misconstrued this Verse of the Qur'an so as to make it lawful for themselves to build mausoleums, monuments and mosques over the tombs of the righteous persons and saints. The Qur'an has, in fact, pointed out the deviation of the workers of iniquity who prevailed upon others and built a place of worship over the Cave of the Sleepers, who were indeed a sign of Resurrection and of the life-after-death. But they abused this good opportunity and produced another means of practicing 'shirk'.

One fails to understand how anyone can deduce from this Verse an argument for the legality of building mosques over the tombs of the righteous people, when the Holy Prophet has categorically prohibited this:

(1) "Allāh has cursed those women who visit tombs and those people who build mosques over them and burn lights over them". (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah)

(2) "Beware that the people, who have passed before you, made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship. I forbid you to do that." (Muslim)

(3) "Allāh has cursed the Jews and the Christians, for they made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship." (Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasa'i)

(4) "The behavior of those people was strange: if a righteous person from among them died, they would build a mosque over his grave and draw his pictures. They will be treated as the worst criminals on the Day of resurrection." (Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasa'i)

Thus it is clear from the above sayings of the Holy Prophet that building of the places of worship over the tombs is utterly unlawful; the Qur'an has merely stated as a historical fact the sinful act of the Christian priests and the Roman rulers and has not sanctioned such a thing. Therefore no God-fearing person can turn this into an argument for building mosques over the tombs.³¹

³¹ Maududi, Vol. 7, pages 19-20

From the above analysis it can safely be concluded that the idea of the mosque as a sacred memorial structure for the dead is not within the spirit of Sunnī Islam.

3.2.1.5 The Mosque Without a Building

There are only two separate groups of Verses which allude to a non-building type prayer space. The word *masjd* in this context may refer to a building as well as any clean place for the performance of prayer:

"Say: " My Lord hath commanded justice; and that ye set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer, and call upon him making your devotion sincere as in his sight: such as he created you in the beginning, so shall you return."

"O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters."³²

Maududi mentions that the Verses refer to the tradition of the Arabs who worshipped at the Ka'ba in the nude.³³ With this Verse, Islam had abolished these vulgar acts and encouraged the Muslims to wear appropriate clothes in worship without being to excessive or wasteful in the expense of the dress. Asad mentions that the word 'Zinah' for beauty in this Verse meant both physical and moral beauty.³⁴ The clothes in Islam should be worn according to the guidelines of the *Shari'a* in terms of modesty and not to create a sense of superiority over other Muslims. As stated in the introduction, there is no particular reference to the performance of prayer in any architectural structure. This is in line with the Prophet's *ḥadīth* that the whole earth was made the mosque for the Muslim to pray.

Another group of Verses that makes no particular mention of a building is as follows:

³² Ali, Surā 7, Verse 29 and 31, p.347

³³ Maududi, Vol. 4, p.22

³⁴ Asad, p. 207

"And the places of worship are for God (alone): so invoke not any one along with God; yet when the devotee of God stands forth to invoke Him, they just make round him a dense crowd."³⁵

The Verse refer to many occasions when the Makkan unbelievers threw filth on the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) while he was praying at the Ka'ba. However, the commentators are unanimous in agreement as to the general application of this Verse throughout the past and the future of human history that whenever there came a person or group that invited people to change their evil ways, they would be subjected to terrible persecution.

The commentators had several interpretations for the term *masjid* in this group of Verses. Maududi records the opinion of several classical commentators:

The commentators generally have taken 'mosques' to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the Verse means: "None should be associated in the worship of Allāh in the places of worship." Hadrat Hassan Basri says: "The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God's earth." He has reasoned out this meaning from the Holy Prophet's hadith: "For me the entire earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity." Hadrat Sa'id bin Jubair has interpreted 'masjid' to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the Verse means: These limbs have been made by Allāh; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allāh.³⁶

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in his commentary, agrees with some of the interpretation and adds further:

This is a Makkan surah, and 'masjid' must be understood, not in the later technical sense of a Mosque, but in the root meaning, of any place, or occasion of worship or humble prostration in the service of God, or any limbs or faculties or accessories used in

³⁵ Ali, Surā 72, Verse 16-19, pp. 1628-1629

³⁶ Maududi, Vol. 15, pp. 106-107

such worship, e.g. hands and feet, lips and voice, understanding or organisation. A number of meanings therefore follow. (1) No place of worship whatever should be used for the worship of any other but the true God. The Ka'aba was then full of idols and their votaries were usurpers. (2) Worship should not be mixed up with vain objects, but should be reserved for the sincere service of God. (3) All our gifts are for God's service, which includes the service of His creatures and for our vainglory.³⁷

These Verses provide an indication that the performance of prayer need not necessarily require the presence of a building sanctified for worship. Prayer can be performed at any clean place except those prohibited by the Prophet, namely at the graveyard, filthy dump site or at a place for answering the call of nature. Even the well known Verses of the Friday Prayers fail to indicate the necessity of a building of worship:

"O you who have attained to faith! When the call to prayer is sounded on the day of congregation, hasten to the remembrance of God, and leave all worldly commerce this is for your own good, if you but knew it. And when the prayer is ended, disperse freely on earth and seek to obtain (something) of God's bounty; but remember God often, so that you might attain to a happy state!"

All these Verses point to an important fact about the initial concept of the mosque. If prayer can be performed at any place on earth, thus the idea of the existence of a Muslim building type known as the 'mosque' suggested in the previous subsections does not necessarily require an emphasis of prayers as its main function. As was alluded to in the previous sections, the initial concept of the mosque thus far was a building type that serves a political function as well as the performance of some religious rituals such as prayer and *i'tikāf*. The Verses above suggests that prayer may not be the most important function which a mosque has to cater for.

³⁷ Op cit., p.1628

3.2.2 The Guardianship of the Mosque

The *Qur'ān* also contains Verses concerning the characters of the Muslim most fitting to be the guardians of the Sacred Mosques and other mosques in general. These Verses can help to determine the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque in Islam by indicating whether there is a special group of Muslims similar to the idea of 'priests' or 'clergymen' in other religions. One of the first qualities of a Muslim necessary to tend the mosques in Islam is given in the following Verses:

"But God did not choose to chastise them while thou (O Prophet) wert still among them, nor would God chastise them when they (might yet) ask for forgiveness. But what have they (now) in their favor that God should not chastise them - seeing that they bar (the believers) from the Inviolable House of Worship, although they are not its rightful guardians? None but the God-conscious can be its guardians: but of this most of these (evildoers) are unaware; and their prayers before the Temple are nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. Taste then, (O unbelievers) this chastisement as an outcome of your persistent denial of the truth!"³⁸

The Verses quoted above relate to the pagans who had suffered both defeat and victory in the two wars by challenging the Muslims to ask their God to punish them. The pagans were arrogant of their 'special' relationship to the Ancient Temple. In these Verses Allāh The Most High explains that the polytheist's positions and relationship to the Ka'ba meant nothing if they prohibit others from worshipping at the temple. Furthermore, the commercial concerns and idolatrous nature of Arab polytheists make them totally unfit to be the guardian of the Ancient Temple which was built by Ibrāhīm not for any other purpose but for the worship of Allāh The Most High. The Verse merely quotes the characteristic of 'God consciousness' without elaborating in detail. However this vague characteristic is more defined clearly in the following Verses:

"It is not for those who ascribe divinity to aught beside God to tend or visit God's houses of worship, the while (by their beliefs)

³⁸ Asad, *Surā 8*, Verses 33-35, pp.243-244

they bear witness against themselves that they are denying the truth. It is they whose works shall come to nought, and they who in the fire shall abide! Only he should visit or tend God's houses of worship who believe in God and the Last Day, and is constant in prayer, and spends in charity, and stand in awe of none but God: for (only such as) these may hope to be among the right guided!"³⁹

The Verse is primarily concerned about the presence of the unbelievers in the Sacred Mosque and the Ka'ba. Commentators are mostly in agreement that the Verse cannot generally be applied to the situation of all mosques in all times since there are authentic traditions or *ḥadīths* where unbelievers were allowed in the mosques for specific purposes.⁴⁰ What is important here is the description of the characters of the Muslim in tending the mosque mentioned as those 'who believe in God and the Last Day, and is constant in prayer, and spends in charity, and stand in awe of none but God'.

In addition to these characters of the Muslims the following Verse mentions the quality of effort required in a true Muslim in tending the mosques:

"Do you, perchance, regard the (mere) giving of water to pilgrims and the tending of the Inviolable House of Worship as being equal to (the works of) one who believes in God and the Last Day and strives hard in God's cause? These (things) are not equal in the sight of God. And God does not grace with His guidance people who (deliberately) do wrong."⁴¹

The Verses above relate to the arrogance of the Arab polytheists of their special social position in caring for the needs of pilgrims to the Ka'ba. It

³⁹ Ibid., Surā 9, Verse 17, p.258

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.258

A difference of opinion exists among the commentators as to the nature of the unbelievers and their unlawful acts in the Ka'ba and the mosques in Islam. It is unanimously agreed that the unbelievers are not allowed to perform any kind of worship at all the mosques in Islam. However, there is a difference of opinion as regards to mere visiting and the presence of unbelievers in the mosques. Asad relates that the prohibition against the visiting of non-Muslims in mosques applies only to the Sacred Precinct and not to all the mosques in Islam for the Prophet had signed a peace treaty with a pagan tribe at the mosque of Madīna after the revelation of this Surā.

⁴¹ Asad, Surā 9, Verses 18-19, pp. 258-259

should be understood that the pilgrimage to Makka was an ancient ritual among the Arabs even before the message of Islam by the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was proclaimed. The Arabs vied with one another for the best positions related to this ritual. The positions and responsibilities were divided between those who maintained the Ka'ba and those who provided food and accommodation for the pilgrims. The tribes who were responsible for these two deeds were considered honoured and privileged for these positions. However, when the pagan Arabs reminded the Muslims about these 'honourable posts', Allāh The Most High answered with the revelation of the above mentioned Verse. Maududi interprets the meaning of the Verse and the positions of so called sacred acts and objects in Islam:

This question has been posed to bring home the fact that the guardianship of a shrine or attendance at it or other religious acts that are done for show, and are exploited by worldly people to establish and maintain the show of their piety, have no value whatsoever in the sight of Allāh. The real worth of a person with Allāh is that he should be sincere in his beliefs and make sacrifices in the Way of Allāh, no matter whether he enjoys or does not enjoy such distinctions or happens to descend or not from a family of 'saints'. On the contrary, those people who lack these excellencies have no value with Allāh, no matter whether they be the descendants of 'saints' or perform some 'religious' acts for show on special occasions. And it is not lawful in any way that the guardianship, etc. of sacred places and institutions should be left in the hands of the worthless people just because they happen to inherit such rights from their forefathers.⁴²

The quality of 'striving hard' can be related to the idea of *djihād* in Islam. *Djihād*, in Islam does not necessarily mean sacrifice during a holy war but its general meaning includes striving with great effort in performing any act of goodness for oneself or others.

The few final characters of the Muslim worthy to tend the mosques are given in the following Verses

"In the Houses (of Worship) which God has allowed to be raised so that His name will be remembered in them, there (are such as)

⁴² Maududi, Vol. 4, p.181

extol His limitless glory at morn and evening - people whom neither (worldly) commerce nor striving after gain can divert from the remembrance of God, and from constancy in prayer, and from charity: (people) who are filled with fear (at the thought) of the Day on which all hearts and eyes will be convulsed, (and who only hope) that God may reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did, and give them, out of His bounty, more (than they deserve): for, God grants sustenance unto whom He wills, beyond all reckoning."⁴³

The word which most of the commentators translated as 'mosque' is actually 'al-buyūt' which is similar to 'al-bayt'. The two Arabic words actually mean 'houses' or 'The House'. There are two important points in this Verse. The first is the question of 'the houses' and the second is the act of 'remembrance'. Ali interprets the word *al-buyūt* which may refer to either the Ka'ba or the mosque of Madīna or any mosques.⁴⁴ He is particular in interpreting the word 'remembrance' in this Verse as not specifically the acts of meditation but the many acts of charity, community service and prayer. The guardians of mosques are the pious Muslims. Piety in Islam is not synonymous with extreme acts of ritual worship such as the performance of many prayers or deep meditations but the pious Muslims are the ones who perform every good act for himself, his family or the community for the sake of following Allāh's commandment. However, Asad interprets the whole Verse as a warning to the Muslims in all times about gathering at mosques purely out of habit and not for the love of and sacrifice for Islam.⁴⁵ Maududi offers a different interpretation of the Verse as follows:

Some commentators have interpreted these 'houses' to mean the mosques, and 'raising them' to mean constructing and reverencing them. Some others, however, take them to mean the houses of the believers and 'raising them' to mean raising their moral status. The words 'to mention His name therein' seem to refer to the mosques and support the first interpretation, but if we look deeper, we see that they support the second interpretation

⁴³ Asad, Surā 24, Verses 36-38, pp.541-542

⁴⁴ Ali, pp.908-909

⁴⁵ Asad, pp. 541-542

equally well. This is because Divine Law does not confine worship to mosques alone as is the case with the priest-ridden religions where the rituals can only be performed under the leadership of the clergy. In Islam a house is also a place of worship like the mosque and every man is its own priest. As this surah mostly contains instructions for ennobling domestic life, we feel that the second interpretation is more in keeping with the context though there is no reason for rejecting the first interpretation. There will be no harm if both the mosques and the houses of the believers are implied here.⁴⁶

In summarising all the qualities of the mosque guardian, it can be seen that these qualities are in actual fact the very qualities of a true *mu'min* and that there are no indications that the guardians of the mosque must have a special character that would markedly differ from other Muslims. Some of the qualities of a true Muslim can be ascertained from the following Verses:

"Those who believe, and whose heart find satisfaction in the remembrance of God: for without doubt in the remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction."⁴⁷

"O you who have attained to faith! When the call to prayer is sounded on the day of congregation, hasten to the remembrance of God, and leave all worldly commerce; this is for your own good, if you but knew it. And when the prayer is ended, disperse freely on earth and seek to obtain (something) of God's bounty; but remember God often, so that you might attain to a happy state!"⁴⁸

There is, therefore, no difference between the guardians of mosques and the true Muslims. There is no requirement for a special elite group of priests to cater for the spiritual needs of the Muslim community. All Muslims are required to strive to achieve the attributes of a true Muslim or a *mu'min*. The Verses also suggest that there be no such persons as monks who relinquish the worldly life in favour of meditation and seclusion in mosques. Since there exists no concept of priesthood and

⁴⁶ Maududi, Vol. 8, pp.150-151

⁴⁷ Ali, Surā 12, Verse 28, p.612

⁴⁸ Asad, Surā 62, Verses 9-10, p.864

monasticism in Islam, it follows that all Muslims may fit the description of 'guardians of the mosque'. The true *mu'min* is not one who gives up all worldly pursuits and concentrate on the acts of ritual devotions without raising a family or contributing to the social, political and economic development of the community. The roles of the individual Muslim, which are discussed in greater detail in another chapter of the thesis, shows that prayer and ritual devotions alone is inadequate for salvation in this world and in the hereafter. The best Muslims are those who sacrifices time, properties and wealth to help others for the sake of Allāh The Most High. It will be shown in another chapter that the relationship between the Muslim individual and the Muslim community is crucial and detrimental to their success in this world and in the hereafter. In this respect, the guardians of the mosque is the responsibility of the whole community and not specific individuals. Although the physical maintenance of the mosque may be the responsibility of the few but the task of developing the community through the activities of the mosque is the responsible of all Muslims. The sad day has indeed arrived when the mosque guardianship is monopolised by certain groups of individuals paid by the government of Muslim countries and the role of the mosque is but one of the many propaganda mechanism used to control the masses. Where, once, the mosque was the place where all Muslim had a right to speak his mind according to the ethics of the Islamic Sharī'a, now he or she can only do so, subject to the permission of the government paid Imam and his committee. Viewed from this perspective, one can simply say that the arrival of the 'Muslim Church' and 'Priesthood' has manifested in the Islamic society throughout the world.

From the above discussion, the idea of the mosque cannot be said to be for purely ritualistic functions because the requirements of God consciousness and charity necessitate the conditions of the guardians to be striving in the world to gain knowledge and wealth so as to be able to stimulate the remembrance of God and to sacrifice for others. The guardians must not purely depend on the mosque to provide for his sustenance as is the case with the priests in other religions who live off the offerings and donations of the society. Guarding the mosque may not only mean that one has to keep it physically clean and well maintained but it would also suggest that the activities towards developing the

community be organised and implemented. Thus it can be suggested that the initial idea of the mosque is not similar to the idea of a monastery or that of priest ridden shrines or temples.

3.2.3 The Functions of the Mosques

The initial concept and eternal ideas of the mosque are implied from the stated functions it is used for. We have mentioned some of these functions in a previous passage in this chapter.⁴⁹ The rituals of circumambulation, prayer and meditation mentioned in the Verses in this passage are mainly meant for the Sacred Mosque. The ritual of circumambulation is unique only to that of the Ka'ba where as the other two functions mentioned are common to all mosques. The following Verse mentions in particular the ritual of meditation in mosques:

"It is lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the (day's) fast: they are as a garment for you and you are as a garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right, and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship from you. Now, then, you may lie with them skin to skin, and avail yourselves of that which God has ordained for you, and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night, and then resume fasting until nightfall; but do not lie with them skin to skin when you are about to abide in meditation in houses of worship. These are the bounds set by God: do not, then, offend against them - (for) it is thus that God makes clear His messages unto mankind, so that they might remain conscious of Him."⁵⁰

The context of the Verse is during the early days of Islam when the command for fasting in Ramadhān had been revealed. Since the purpose of fasting is the control of carnal desires, the Muslims were prohibited to have any sexual relation with their spouses during the day time. It was supposed to have been understood that they were allowed to have sexual relation at night but the Muslims were unsure and some of them performed the sexual acts with a guilty conscience. The Verse was revealed to verify and strengthen the permission to 'join together.' on the nights of Ramadhān.

⁴⁹ Please refer to page 89, Surā 2, Verse 125

⁵⁰ Maududi, Vol. 1 page 141

At a glance it can be concluded that the function of the mosque is as a place of prayer and meditation. However, in the light of the analysis of the other Verses this conclusion must be carefully weighed. Firstly, it cannot be ascertained concretely whether prayer and meditation mentioned in these Verses are the only functions of a mosque. It cannot even be ascertained that they are the most important functions. The fact that they are mentioned can only show either that they are additional functions or that they are important in themselves. The fact that the *Qur'ān* does not mention specific social programmes cannot be taken as negative evidence since it was shown that mosques have political functions. It may very well be that these rituals support the idea of the political function of the mosque. The subject of prayer is discussed in greater detail in another chapter of the thesis. That particular chapter contains a discussion concerning the social implications of the purpose and meaning of prayer in Islam and their relationship to the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque. Furthermore, the practice of 'meditation' in Islam must be analysed carefully within the proper context of ritual worship and social responsibilities. The English translation of the word '*i'tikāf*' as 'meditation' is a poor choice of substitute. The subject of *i'tikāf* will be discussed in greater detail in the same chapter as that of the meaning of prayer. Thus, it can finally be concluded that the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque as a place of prayer and meditation proves inconclusive within the context of the Verses quoted in this subsection. It is only through a detailed understanding of these two rituals that a clearer idea of the mosque can be ascertained.

3.3 Conclusion

There are several important conclusions that can be drawn from the above analysis concerning the initial concept of the mosque in Islam. The most obvious conclusion is that there exists a special building type as the focus for the Muslim community. This conclusion is drawn directly from the practice of *i'tikāf* or loosely translated as meditation in Islam. The practice of *i'tikāf* is valid only in a building type considered as a mosque. The first conclusion is also drawn from the fact that the *Qur'ān* mentions the mosque as a similar building type to that of

the houses of worship of the monotheistic religions. The mosque may be similar from the aspect that it houses some rituals of Islam such as prayer and *i'tikāf*.

The second conclusion is that the mosque is not merely a place for the performance of ritual worship but also serves as an important place for political functions. The conclusion is directly drawn from the Verses related to the opposition mosque and the political incidents which occurred in the Al-Masḍjid Al-Ḥarām.

The third conclusion is that the mosque is in no way connected to the idea of a venerated place as a memorial tomb because its importance does not lie in it being a mere symbol.

The fourth and most important conclusion is the ironic fact that even though the literal meaning of the word mosque is as the 'place of prostration' which implies its importance as the place for prayer, the Verses have clearly indicated that the presence of a mosque is not required in the performance of any type of obligatory prayers. This implies that the presence of the mosque is not merely for the performance of prayers but more importantly it suggests its importance as the place for other activities in Islam.

Finally it should be mentioned that at this point in the thesis the initial concept and eternal ideas of the mosque is still unclear although the suggestions leads to its primary purpose as a place for ritual worship and as a centre for political activities. The meaning of *i'tikāf* and prayer must be understood clearly in relation to the mosque before a more definitive idea of the primary purpose of the mosque can be established. The Qur'ān has also not mentioned anything about the functions and purposes of the Prophet's Mosque in Madīna. It is important to ascertain the reasons and intentions behind the building and use of this most important community mosque in Islam.

Chapter Four

THE IDEA OF THE MOSQUE FROM THE AL-ḤADĪTH

Introduction

The absolute importance of the *Qur'ān* and the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as the fundamental basis of the Islamic way of life was mentioned in the previous chapter. The present chapter contains an examination of the initial concept and eternal ideas of the mosque from the perspectives of the Sunna from the *ḥadīths* recognised as authentic by the Sunnī orthodoxy.

4.1 The Meaning of Sunna and Al-Ḥadīth

The literal meaning of the word '*sunna*' is 'custom'. The Sunna of a tribe, race or individual are the whole set of beliefs, actions and sayings of that individual or group of people.¹ In the Islamic *Sharī'a*, the word '*sunna*' usually refers to the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). There are also Muslim scholars who use the term to include the custom and tradition of the Prophet's Ṣaḥābah or Companions and the *Ṭābi'ūn* or the Muslims who have met and studied directly under the supervision of the Companions. The Muslim jurists hold the three sources of references in high regard after the Prophet's saying that the best generation of Muslim is that of his Companions and those that came after them. However, the Sunna of the

¹ T.P. Hughes, *A Dictionary Of Islam* (London: W.A. Allen & Co., 1895)

Prophet Muḥammad is clearly separated from the Sunna of the Companions both in authenticity and importance. The unanimous agreement among the Muslim jurists is that the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet are the only binding ones on all Muslims.

The Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is documented in the body of knowledge known as the Al-Ḥadīth. The literal meaning of the word 'ḥadīth' is news about a person or an event. When the news is about the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) then the expression used is 'Al-Ḥadīth' which represents the whole body of written and oral traditions relating to his life. In the thesis the word ḥadīth in the singular or ḥadīths in the plural will be used to refer to the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Professor Dr. Mohamed Abdul Rauf of the International Islamic University in Malaysia defines Al-Ḥadīth in the following manner:

Al-Hadith may be best defined as the total records of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) as well as his silent approvals and the description of his person. Thus Al-Hadith is of four categories:

- a. The Prophet's speeches, which, after the Holy Qur'an, are in the highest order of eloquence.
- b. Description of the Prophet's deeds and actions by his Companions , such as how he walked, how he talked, how he dressed and how he prayed.
- c. The Prophet's tacit approvals, i.e. the silence of the Prophet about things which happened or were practiced under his eyes and with his knowledge. If he should be disagreeable, he indicated his objection as he did when his wife Aishah provided for him a cushion on which some figures were drawn. An example of his silent approval is a statement by a Companion which says: ' we used to consume horse meat at the time of the Prophet'.
- d. The fourth category of Al-Hadith is the description of his person such as his height, the colour of his eyes and his face and other bodily features.²

² Muhammad Rauf, Authenticity of Al-Hadith (Islamic Affair Division, Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia , 1986)

The fourth category of the *ḥadīth* will not be of concern in the thesis. The first three categories are of utmost importance in providing clues of the Prophet's sayings about architecture and his actions in specific spaces.

Al-Ḥadīth is the second most important source of Islamic law but in some cases it can even be argued that it is as indispensable as the Qur'ān. Muslim scholars have always stressed the secondary nature of Al-Ḥadīth purely out of respect for the Qur'ān so that the Prophet would never be elevated to the level of Godhood as what had happened to the Prophet Isa (Jesus). But, in reality, Islam would be impossible to practice without the presence of Al-Ḥadīth. To illustrate this statement, the Qur'ān contains injunctions about the ablution rites, prayer rites, *zakāt* (religious tax), performance of *ḥajj* which are specific rituals to be performed but no where does it indicate how to perform them under many conditions. It is only in the *ḥadīths* that we find the methods and instructions relating to each specific ritual. The Qur'ān also contains description of the roles and attributes of a *mu'min* such as humility, kindness, self sacrifice, fear of God, valour, perseverance and other but it is only through the illustration of the Prophet's life do these roles and attributes become manifested and as a guide for Muslims in their daily life. The Qur'ān supports the importance and crucial nature of the Al-Ḥadīth in the following Verses:

'Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern of conduct for any one whose hope is in God and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of God.'³

"O ye who believe. Obey God and obey the Apostle and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to God and His Apostle if ye do believe in God and the Last Day. That is best and most suitable for final determination."⁴

³ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Quran: Translation and Commentary (Maryland, USA: Amana Corp., 1983) Surā 33, Verse 21, pg. 1109

⁴ Ibid., Surā 4, Verse 59, pg 198

Syed Qutb, in his book 'The Milestone', had described the age of the Prophet and the Companions as 'the age of the Qur'ānic Generation'.⁵ This phrase meant that it was only at this time in the long history of Islam that the Qur'ān had assimilated into the social fiber of the community and it is considered as the model *par excellence* for the later communities to emulate in both its social and spiritual contexts.

In the light of the importance of Al-Ḥadīth in Islam, it is surprising that most historians and theoreticians of Islamic architecture choose to ignore the wealth of information that the *ḥadīth* can offer. Although it can acceptably be argued that the architecture of Islam and the mosque can better be understood from the surviving monuments of buildings built and used by Muslims, it has already been pointed out that these products were influenced by many factors that drown any significance of the influence of the Islamic spirit. Only a thorough examination on the influences of the past monuments can help in the selection of those buildings which reflect truly the Islamic spirit. Then and only then can the adaptation and critical revivalism can be accepted.

Since no such work of this nature is seriously considered at the moment there exists another way in determining the theory of Islamic architecture and that of the mosque in particular which is through a detailed analysis of the Prophet's *ḥadīths* and the the Verses of the Qur'ān. Instead of theorising architecture through the analysis of building typology a direct source is consulted.

Before ending the argument on the importance of the use of the *ḥadīth* as a source for theorising on the architecture of the mosque, the criticism on the *ḥadīth* as a misleading set of traditions concerning the mere opinions and preferences or tastes of the Prophet should be dealt with briefly. It cannot be denied that the early compilers of the *ḥadīths* had also included the opinions and tastes of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The answer to this criticism is that whenever the Prophet said or did anything which was a result of his own personal opinions he would simply point out as so. This can be illustrated in the following *ḥadīths*:

⁵ Syed Qutb, Milestone, (Unity Publishing Company) pp.. 15-22

Musa bin Talha reported: I and Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) happened to pass by people near the date palm trees. He (the Prophet) said, "What are these people doing?" They said, "They are grafting, i.e. they combine the male with the female (tree) and thus they yield more fruit. Thereupon Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "I do not find it to be of any use." The people were informed about it and they abandoned this practice. The Apostle was later on informed that the yield had dwindled whereupon he said, "If there is any use in it then they should do it, for it was just a personal opinion of mine, and do not go after my personal opinion; but when I say to you anything on behalf of Allāh, then do accept it, for I do not attribute lie to Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious."⁶

I was told that men of Bani Salama said that al-Hubab b. al-Mundhir b. al-Jamuh said to the Apostle, "Is this a place which God has ordered you to occupy, so that we can neither advance nor withdraw from it, or is it a matter of opinion and military tactics?" When the Apostle replied it was the latter he pointed out that it was not the place to stop but that they should go on to the water nearest to the enemy and halt there, stop up the wells beyond it, and construct a cistern so that they would have plenty of water; then they could fight their enemy who would have nothing to drink. The Apostle agreed that this was an excellent plan and it was immediately carried out; the wells were stopped; a cistern was built and filled with water from which his men replenished their drinking vessels.⁷

The *ḥadīths* quoted above indicates clearly that there are traditions which directly concerns the Prophet's personal taste and desires. The Muslim must always take care in differentiating between the deeds or aspirations which forms part of the sacred Sunna and those that are merely of his own personal opinions and desires. One way to solve this problem is never to rely on a single *ḥadīth* without referring to its particular historical context. One must always be clear of the concept of Islam and its meanings according to the *Qur'ān*, the general body of Al-

⁶ A. Hamid Siddiqi, *Sahih Muslim*, Third Edition (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1980) Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 5830, p. 1259

⁷ A. Guillaume, *The Life Of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, Seventh Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Ḥadīth and the opinions of the jurists before deciding on whether a ḥadīth merits the consideration as part of a sacred Sunna.

4.2 The Classification and Authenticity of Al-Ḥadīth

Concerning the authenticity of the ḥadīth corpus, the following is a brief description of the historical background and method of classification. The ḥadīths were collected during the time of the Prophet. He knew about this act and had only warned the Companions as to be extremely careful so that there can exist no question with regards to the words of Allāh and his own being mistaken for one another. When the Prophet passed away, the need to refer to the Prophets traditions mostly concerning legal injunctions was such that it set up a fervour to document as faithfully as possible his sayings, actions and silent approvals. The process of compilations and the rigors of the selection criteria and classification occurred in the third century of the Hidjra or the 9th century of the Common Era. This massive work was pioneered by the renowned scholars such as Imām Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Nasā'ī, at-Tirmidhi and Ibnu Mādjā. The rigors of selecting authentic ḥadīths can be illustrated as follows. Each ḥadīth must have an unbroken chain of transmitters and each transmitter must be verified by the numerous biographical work as to the transmitter's piety and memory power. This strict criteria of classification frequently results in cases such as in the case of Imām Bukhārī, a compiler who might have memorised close to one million ḥadīths, would end up documenting only less than eight thousand ḥadīths which he had considered as authentic. This method of selection clearly dwarfs any method of historical or social research. The ḥadīths were initially compiled under the names of the Companions but later it was compiled under specific topics relating to the subjects like marriage, prayer, ablution and djihād so that the scholars can easily refer in the pronouncement of religious verdicts.

The present chapter contains an analysis of the ḥadīths relating to the types and functions of mosques during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The ḥadīths are classified into three main sections. The first section contains description of the functions of the different types of mosques during the time of the

Prophet in Makka before his famous flight to Madīna. The second section deals with the functions and types of the mosques located in and around Madīna. The third and final section deals with the Prophet's actual sayings about the idea of the mosque in Islam. All of these sections have but a single goal in common which is to establish what the initial concept of the mosque was in the early days of Islam.

4.3 A Survey of Ḥadīths related to the Mosque

The present section is divided as follows. The first part contains an analysis of the initial concept of the mosque from the Prophet's traditions in the Makkan period. This period extends from the Prophet's first thirteen years of his ministry in Makka. It also consists of some ideas of what the place of worship was in pre-Islamic Arabia. The second part consists of the Prophet's traditions concerning various types and functions of mosques in the Madīna period which extends from the date of the Hidjra to his demise. The final part consists of an analysis of the sayings of the Prophet concerning the mosque.

4.3.1 The Types and Functions of Mosques during the Makkan Period

There are only three types of mosques that can be clearly ascertained from Ibnu Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allāh. There are the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'ba, the personal mosque and the community house. Most of the narratives centres around the socio-political functions of the Ka'ba and its Sacred Precinct.

4.3.1.1 The Sacred Mosque

The first type of mosque considered is the Ka'ba. The Ka'ba is a building in the shape of a cube used in pre-Islamic times to house the idols of the Arab polytheists. It is considered as a sacred temple by the pagan Arabs. There were many varied rituals of worship connected with the pagan religion occurring in and around the temple. The temple is venerated by virtue of its presence as the most ancient house of worship known to the Arabs who traced its origin to the time of the Prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl (peace be upon them).

The Sacred Mosque refers to the temple proper and also the area surrounding it. The limits of the Sacred Precinct of that time cannot be fully ascertained. However, since we are concerned only about the activities related to and in the vicinity of the Ka'ba, this issue is unimportant.

The Sacred Mosque is used for a variety of functions. From the survey of these functions it can easily be ascertained that the mosque played a central role in the social, political and religious life of the Arabs of that time. Aside from the pagan ritual worship such as circumambulating in the nude as referred to in the previous chapter, the Ka'ba is the meeting place of all the elite members of the tribes where debates, proclamations and discussions were held.

The function of the mosque as a meeting place where the nobles would meet and socialise are implied in the following accounts:

A man of Aslum, who had a good memory, told me that Abū Jahl passed by the apostle at al-Ṣafā, insulted him and behaved most offensively, speaking spitefully of his religion and trying to bring him into disrepute. The apostle did not speak to him. Now a freedwoman, belonging to 'Abdullah b. Jud'ān b. Amr b. Ka'ab b. Sa'd b. Taym b. Murra, was in her house listening to what went on. When he went away he betook himself to the assembly of the Qurasyh at the Ka'ba and sat there. Within a little while, Ḥamza b. 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib arrived, with his bow hanging from his shoulder, returning from the chase, for he was fond of hunting and used to go out shooting. When he came back from a hunt he never went home until he had circumambulated the Ka'ba, and that done when he passed by an assembly of the Qurasyh he stopped and saluted and talked with them. He was the strongest man of Qurasyh, and the most unyielding. The apostle had gone back to his house when he passed by this woman, who asked him if he had heard of what Abu'l-Ḥakam b. Hishām had done just recently to his nephew Muhammad; how he had found him sitting quietly there, and insulted him, and cursed him, and treated him badly, and that Muhammad had answered not a word. Ḥamza was filled with rage, for God purposed to honour him, so he went out at a run and did not stop to greet anyone, meaning to punish Abū Jahl when he met him. When he got to the mosque he saw him sitting among the people, and went up to him until he stood over him, when he lifted up his bow and struck him a violent blow with it, saying, "Will you insult him when I follow his religion? Hit me back if you

can!" Some of Bani Makhzūm got up to go to Abu Jahl's help, but he said, "Let Abū 'Umāra alone for, by God, I insulted his nephew deeply."⁸

It can be seen, from the account above, that the Ka'ba was also a general place of assembly as well as a place of ritual worship. The exchange between Hamza and Abu Jahl obviously took place near the Sacred Temple. When Hamza was looking for Abu Jahl, he had gone straight to the mosque which suggests that it was a place most frequented by an Arab leader such as Abu Jahl. Another account which describes the mosque as the place of social gathering to listen to news and information can be observed from the incident of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*. Immediately after this incident where the Prophet had undergone the Miraculous Journey to Jerusalem and experienced the Ascent to the Throne of God, he went directly to relate the incident to the *Quraysh*. The Prophet was warned by his close friends not to do so because the incredulity of the incident may damage his reputation as a sane person. Nevertheless, he went to relate the incident at the mosque and was utterly ridiculed by some of his relatives and friends as in the following account:

Then the apostle returned to Mecca and in the morning told the Quraysh what had happened. Most of them said, "By God, this is a plain absurdity! A caravan takes a month to go to Syria and a month to return and can Muhammad do the return journey in one night?" Many Muslims gave up their faith; some went to Abū Bakr and said, "What do you think of your friend now, Abū Bakr? He alleges that he went to Jerusalem last night and prayed there and came back to Mecca." He replied that they were lying about the apostle; but they said that he was at the mosque at that very moment telling the people about it. Abū Bakr said, "If he says so then it is true. And what is so surprising in that? He tells me that communications from God from heaven to earth come to him in an hour of a day or night and I believe him, and that is more extraordinary than that at which you boggle!"⁹

Whenever an Arab noble was to be found, he would most probably be in the vicinity of the Sacred Temple. When one of the

⁸ Ibid., p. 131-132

⁹ Ibid., p. 182-183

Madīnan tribal leaders who had taken the First Pledge Of 'Aḳaba with the Prophet was captured, he was mistreated until one Arab took pity of him and asked whether there was any tribe that could protect him as in the following narration:

'As they were dragging me along, a man took pity on me and said, " You poor devil, haven't you any right to protection from one of the Qurasyh?" "Yes," I said, "I have. I used to guarantee the safety of the merchants of Jubayr b. Muṭ'im b. 'Adīy b. Naufal b. 'Abdu Manāf and protect them from those who might have might wronged them in my country; also al-Ḥārith b. Ḥarb b, Umayya b. 'Abdu Shams b. 'Abdu Manāf." " Very well, then, call out the names of these two men and say what tie there is between you," he said. This I did and that man went to them and found them in the mosque beside the Ka'ba and told them and mentioning my claim on them. When they heard who I was they acknowledged the truth of my claim and came and delivered me.'¹⁰

The Sacred Mosque was also used as the place to pronounce any official proclamation. Most of these proclamations usually include announcements of protection of such and such a tribe over such and such a person, proclamations of the nobles among the Arabs who had accepted Islam and political statements with regards to a treaty or boycott. Some of these proclamations can be seen in the following narratives:

When 'Uthmān b. Maṣ'ūn saw the misery in which the apostle's companions were living while he lived night and day under al-Walid's protection he said, "It is more than I can bear that I should be perfectly safe under the protection of a polytheist while my friends and co-religionists are afflicted and distressed by God's sake." So he went to al-Walīd and renounced his protection. "Why, nephew," he asked, " Can it be that one of my people has injured you?" "No," he answered, "but I want to be under God's protection: I don't want to ask for anyone else's". Al-Walīd asked him to come to the mosque and renounce his protection publicly as he had given it publicly. When they got there al-Walīd said : " 'Uthmān here has come to renounce my protection." "True," said the latter, " I have found him loyal and honourable in his

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 206

protection, but I don't want to ask anyone but God for protection; so I give him back his promise!" So saying he went away.¹¹

The *ḥadīth* relates an incident during the time when the Prophet, the Muslims and their families were boycotted by the pagan Arabs. This was one of the most difficult trials that the early converts had to face because the economic sanctions against them include the dissolvment of several marriage bonds and the forbiddence of the transfer of food between friends and relatives to the Muslims. The boycott ended when some of the polytheists went against the agreement of the boycott and helped their relatives and friends who were starving. The third *ḥadīth* quoted below concerns the Prophet's request for protection from one of the Arab tribes. When his uncle, Abu Talib, died the Prophet was left without any tribal protection. As a result, he was bitterly persecuted to the point that he had gone to a neighboring settlement known as Tā'if to invite the tribes there to Islam and also to seek their protection. Unfortunately the Tā'if tribes were influenced by the political leaders of Makka and met the Prophet with a harsher treatment. Thus when the Prophet returned to Makka, he despatched a Muslim to the city to seek the protection of one of the tribe of al-Mut'im;

In the morning, al-Muṭ'im having girt on his weapons, he and his sons and his nephews went into the mosque. When Abū Jahl saw him he asked, "Are you giving protection or following him?" "Giving protection, of course," he said. So the Prophet came into Mecca and dwelt there.¹²

The Sacred Mosque was the place where important debates, discussions and counsels between the tribal leaders took place. It was also the place where the leaders receive foreign deputations. In the following *ḥadīth*, the Prophet was involved with one of the important counsels with the pagan Arabs

The apostle sat one day, so I have heard, with al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra in the mosque, and al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith came and sat

¹¹ Ibid., p. 169

¹² Ibid., p. 194

with them in the assembly where some of Qurasyh men were. When the apostle spoke al-Naḍr interrupted him, and the apostle spoke to him until he silenced him. Then he read to him and to the others: "Verily ye and what ye serve other than God is the fuel of hell. You will come to it . If these had been gods they would not have come to it , but all will be in it everlastingly. There is wailing and there they will not hear."¹³

The Arab leaders used the mosque in their important debates and counsels. The following *ḥadīth* describe the controversial matter of the Bani_Hashim boycott initiated by Abū Jahl. Some of the polytheists did not have the heart to see their own family and friends suffer and they met secretly to come to terms with this matter. Having unanimously decided to oppose Abū Jahl, they had agreed to publicly renounce the boycott document since they were not party to the decision concerning it. The secret council elected Zuhayr as their spokesman as in the following *ḥadīth*:

So on the morrow Zuhayr clad in a long robe went around the Ka'ba seven times; then he came forward and said, " O people of Mecca, are we to eat and clothe ourselves while the B. Hāshim perish unable to buy or sell? By God I will not sit down until this evil boycotting document is torn up!" Abū Jahl, who was at the side of the mosque, exclaimed, "You lie, by Allāh. It shall not be torn up." You are a greater liar; we were not satisfied with the document when it was written." Abū'l Bakhtarī said, " 'Zama'a is right. We are not satisfied with what is written and we don't hold with it" Al-Muṭ'im said, " You are both right and anyone who says otherwise is a liar. We take Allāh to witness that we dissociate ourselves from the whole idea and what is written in the document." Hishām spoke in the same sense. Abū Jahl said, " This is a matter which has been decided overnight. It has been discussed somewhere else." Now Abu Talib was sitting at the side of the mosque. When al-Muṭ'im went up to the document to tear it in pieces he found that worms had already eaten it except the words' In Thy name O Allāh.'¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., p. 163

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 172-173

The mosque was also used as the distinguished place to receive foreign deputations. The *ḥadīth* below describes the public meeting between the Prophet and the Christian deputation from Najran. The deputation held debates and discussions with the Prophet while the *Quraysh* witnessed this meeting. The fact that the Makkan polytheists did not protest to this meeting implies that it was a natural and an acceptable social norm to receive foreign guest at the mosque in their culture.

While the apostle was in Mecca some twenty Christians came to him from Abyssinia when they heard news of him. They found him in the mosque and sat and talked with him, asking questions, while some Qurayshites were in the meeting around the Ka'ba. When they had asked all the questions they wished the apostle invited them to come to God and read the Qur'an to them. When they heard the Qur'an their eyes flowed with tears, and they accepted God's call, believed in him, and declared his truth.¹⁵

The Sacred Mosque was used by the polytheists and the Muslims as a place of ritual worship. It was stated that the Ka'ba building had served mainly as a temple for the storage of idols and that most of the rituals occurred outside the building itself. When the early form of prayer was instituted, the Muslims had prayed secretly in houses, glens and wherever they held their secret meetings. But when Hamza and 'Umar converted to Islam, the Muslims prayed at the Ka'ba.

When 'Amr and 'Abdullah came to the Qurasyh, not having been able to bring back the Prophet's companions and having received a sharp rebuff from the Negus, and when 'Umar became a Muslim, he being a strong, stubborn man whose proteges none dare attack, the prophet's companions were so fortified by him and Hamza that they got the upper hand of Qurasyh. 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd used to say, " We could not pray at the Ka'ba until 'Umar became a Muslim, and then he fought the Qurasyh until he could pray there and we prayed with him."¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 179

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 155

It should be mentioned that the Ka'ba was not the official *kibla* of the Muslims in these early form of prayer. It was only after the migration that the decree of Allāh changed the *kibla* from Jerusalem to the Ka'ba. Since the matter of *kibla* before this decree was not inspired to the Prophet, he had taken his own initiative to pray facing Jerusalem probably as the symbol of unity and respect for the pure messages of Christianity and Judaism. There are reports of Muslims who violated the Prophet's personal opinion and prayed facing the Ka'ba.

4.3.1.2 The Personal Mosque

There were also other types of mosque apart from the sacred temple of Ka'ba and its surroundings. Ibnu Ishaq records a monastery type of building built by one of the Arabs who believed in a monotheistic religion as in the account below:

When the apostle was established in his house and God had manifested his religion therein and made him glad with the company of the emigrants and helpers Abū Qays spoke the following verses.

He was a man who had lived as a monk in heathen days and worn a black mantle of camel-hair, given up idols, washed himself after impurity, kept himself clean from women in the courses. He had thought of adopting Christianity but gave it up and went into a house of his and made a mosque of it, allowing no unclean person to enter. He said that he worshipped the Lord of Abraham when he abandoned idols and loathed them. When the apostle came to Medina he became a good Muslim. He was an old man who spoke the truth and glorified God in paganism.¹⁷

The mosque possessed also the meaning of a private place of worship as indicated in Ibnu Ishaq's account of Abu Bākr's personal sanctuary as follows:

Abū Bakr had a mosque by the door of his house among the B. Jumah where he used to pray. He was a tender hearted man and when he read the Qur'an he was moved to tears. Youths, slaves and women used to stand by him astonished at his demeanour.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 236-237

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 171

4.3.1.3 The Community House

The Prophet had also used his house as a prayer space as well as an assembly place to teach the new religion. The following account describes how the enemies of Islam had secretly penetrated the Muslim's secret meetings:

Muhammad b. Muslim b. Shihab al-Zuhri told me that he was told that Abū Sufyān b. Harb and Abū Jahl b. Hishām and al-Akhnas b. Sharīq b. 'Amr b. Wahb al-Thaqafī, an ally of B. Zuhra, had gone out by night to listen to the apostle as he was praying in his house. Everyone of them chose a place to sit where he could listen, and none knew where his fellow was sitting. So they passed the night listening to him, until as the dawn rose, they dispersed.¹⁹

4.3.1.4 The Idea of the Mosque Before the Hidjra

The above accounts shows several important meanings of the mosque in pre-Islamic and during the early days of Islam. The mosque is shown to be a special sacred place to the Arabs. It was the place where they worshipped and housed their Gods. The mosque was also the main meeting and social place for the Arab nobles for it was here that they held debates, discussions and listen to the counsel of one another. It was also the place where official delegations were received and the most important place to proclaim or renounce a tribal protection. Thus the mosque served as the Arab's religious, political and social centre. The most important point to remember here is that the Prophet had participated fully in all these functions with the exception of worshipping idols. He had made no comments whatsoever of disagreeing with the nature of the mosque as such. It is important to remember that he was to duplicate and add many more functions to the concept of the mosque in the Madīna Mosque a few years later. Many scholars in the field of architectural history ignore this important point. The Arabs were certainly aware of the splendid churches of Christianity, synagogues of Judaism, the fire temples of the Persian and the Greco-Roman houses of worship. These buildings represent architectural types of singular functions of worship in contrast to the multi-function

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 142

character of the mosque in the Arab civilisation. It is totally unjustified to claim that the Arabs were uncivilised by the use of some criteria of civilisation from a certain way of life. If the Arabs show no affinity to glorify a building and treat it as an object of sculpture or glorify the interior as a representation of 'the Kingdom of God' then it must be taken as a particular way of life. If the Prophet showed no difference of opinions with regards to this particular view then his silence of this matter is of utmost importance to be considered in the development of architecture in the Islamic spirit. The silence of the Prophet may not be taken as his total and unconditional rejection of all that is considered as architecture even by other civilisations but the total dismissal of his *ḥadīths* with regard to the matter of mosque architecture is a highly questionable affair.

4.3.2 The Types and Functions of Mosques during the Medīnan Period

This section contains a description of the functions and types of mosques during the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) lifetime in Madīna.

4.3.2.1 The Prophet's Mosque in Madīna

The Prophet was forced to leave Makka during the thirteenth year of his ministry. The political situation in Makka was such that his protection among his family members was not as strong as that of the polytheists who had united to assassinate him and was fully prepared against any retaliation from the tribes of his family. Before the flight to Madīna which is known as the '*Hidjra*', the Prophet had secured the loyalty of several leaders of the tribes that had come from Madīna during the ancient *ḥadj* ritual. The Fealty of 'Aḳaba was one of the most important turning points in the history of Islam as it had secured strong protection for the Muslims and had also provided a city and a community to be the model of an Islamic nation. When the Prophet reached Madīna, he stayed at one of the Anṣār's house whose name was Abū Ayyub al-Anṣārī. It was narrated that the Prophet was offered many houses to reside but he had diplomatically decided that he would stay and build his mosque and residence wherever his camel came to stop. The camel had stopped in front of Abū Ayyub's house. Within a

short period after that the Prophet commenced the building of the mosque and apartments for his wives. The building consists of a row of apartments on one side of the rectangular plan . On one end of the rectangle was a space roofed with palm fibres supported by timber columns. This space was used for prayers and many other purposes. At the opposite end was also a roofed space for the *Ṣuffa* Muslims. These were Muslims who do not have close relatives or families in Madīna. They came solely to learn about Islam and participate in the community. They earned their livelihood through a variety of works but spent most of the time with the Prophet. The whole mosque courtyard fronting the apartments was fenced by adobe brickwork. The fence was penetrated by three entrances at the sides. The plan of the mosque can be seen in Figure 6.

The Prophet's mosque in his lifetime was used for a variety of functions. It was the main education centre and the meeting place of all the Muslims. It was the headquarters for war preparations and as a shelter for the wounded whilst prisoners and captives were kept adjacent to it. It was the courthouse where judgment was taken and the guilty punished in front of all the Muslims. It was the main administrative and political centre for the reception of deputations and diplomatic discussions. We present the *ḥadīths* pertaining to this discussion for the sole purpose of describing the atmosphere of the Prophet's mosque in the days when Islam possessed the best model of a *mu'min* and Islamic Umma or society.

The mosque was used as the education centre where the Companions learned many aspects of Islam and heard the new Revelations from God through the Prophet. Both men and women strived to learn Islam at the mosque. The *ḥadīths* are as follows:

It is reported on the authority of Abū Huraira that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) said, " Get together , for I am going to recite one third of the Qur'ān before you." And those who got together gathered at his house(the mosque). Then Allāh Apostle came out and recited the Sūra Al-Ikhlāṣ.²⁰

²⁰ Siddiqui, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 1771, p. 387

Zainab, the wife of 'Abdullah(b. Mas'ud): I was in the mosque when the Prophet saw me and said, " Give Ṣadaqa even though it is with your own jewelry.²¹

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī said: I sat with the company of the poor members of the Emigrants(Ahlul Suffa, or those who stayed in the Prophet's mosque). Some of them were sitting together because of lack of clothing while a Reader was reciting to us. All of a sudden the Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him) came along and stood beside us. When the Apostle of Allāh stood, the Reader stopped and gave him a salutation . He asked, " What were you doing? " We said, " Allāh's Apostle! We had a reader who was reciting to us and we were listening to the Book of Allāh the Exalted. "The Apostle of Allāh then said : Praise be to Allāh Who has put among my people those with whom I have ordered to keep myself." The Apostle of Allāh then sat among us so as to be like one of us.²²

The mosque was also used as a place for social interaction where modest celebrations, amusement and sports were held. This is where the Muslims gathered to socialise while learning religious knowledge. There were some who had taken the opportunity to attend to some business discussion but mostly at a minor level. There were those who came to rest and take a short nap away from home. Children was also known to frequent the mosque and the Prophet did not forbid them. The *ḥadīths* related to this social function are as follows:

Umm 'Aṭīyya reported: The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) commanded us to bring out on 'Īd-ul-Fiṭr and Id-ul-Aḍḥā(Muslim Celebrations) young women , menstruating women and purdah observing ladies(veiled ladies). The menstruating women kept back from prayer, but participated in goodness and supplication of the Muslims. I said: Messenger of Allāh , one of us does not have an outer garment (to cover her face and body). He said: Let her sister cover her with her outer garment.²³

²¹ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 2188, p. 480

²² Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan Abu Dawud* (New Delhi: Al-Medina Publication (P) Ltd., 1985) Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 3658, p. 1040

²³ Siddiqi, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 1938, p. 419

'Ā'isha reported that some Abyssinians came and gave a demonstration of armed fight on the 'Īd Day in the mosque. The Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) invited me to see the fight . I placed my head on his shoulder and began to see their sport till it was I who turned away from watching them. ²⁴

Simāk b. Ḥarb reported that Jābir bin Samura said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to sit at the place where he observed morning or dawn prayer till the sun rose or when it had risen ; he would stand and the Companions would talk about matters pertaining to the days of ignorance and they would laugh at these matters while the Prophet only smiled. ²⁵

Abū Qatāda reported: As we were sitting in the mosque , the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) came with Umāma, the daughter of Abu'l-'Āṣ and Zainab, daughter of the Prophet on his shoulder. He led the people in prayer. When he bowed he put her down and when he stood up after prostration, he lifted her again. ²⁶

Narrated Abū Bakra: I heard the Prophet(peace be upon him) talking at the pulpit while Al-Ḥassan was sitting beside him, (Al-Ḥassan was the grandson of the Prophet), and the Prophet was once looking at the people and at another time at Al-Ḥassan, and saying, " This son of mine is a Sayid (chief) and perhaps Allāh will bring about between two sects of the Muslims through him. ' ²⁷

Narrated Jābir bin 'Abdullah : I went to the Prophet while he was in the mosque. After the Prophet told me to pray two Raka'āt, he repaid me the debt he owed me and gave me an extra amount. ²⁸

²⁴ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 1943, p. 421

²⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1413, p. 325

²⁶ Ibid., Vol.1, *ḥadīth* no. 1108, p. 274

²⁷ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, The Translations Of The Meanings Of Sahīh Al-Bukhārī (Beirut-Lebanon: Dar Al-Arabia, no.date) Vol. 5, *ḥadīth* no. 89 p. 66

²⁸ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 579, p.340 . The prayer was probably the Tahiyah al-Masjdīd Prayer

Ka'ab bin Mālik said that in the time of the Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him), he made demand in the mosque for payment of a debt due to him from Ibn Abī Ḥadrad, and their voices rose till the Apostle of Allāh, who was in his house, heard them. The Apostle of Allāh then went out to them and removing the curtain of his apartment, he called Ka'ab bin Mālik addressing, "O Ka'ab!" The Apostle made a gesture with his hand indicating: Remit half the debt due to you. Ka'ab said, "I shall do so, Apostle of Allāh."²⁹

'Abbād bin Tamīm reported from his uncle that he saw Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) lying in the mosque and placing his one foot upon the other.³⁰

A man from Banu Amir reported that Abu Dharr said: I came to the Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) at noon. He was resting in the shade of the mosque along with a group of his companions.³¹

Sahl b. Sa'd reported: Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) came to the house of his daughter, Fāṭima, and he did not find her husband, 'Alī, in the house whereupon he said, "Where is your uncle's son?" She said, "There cropped up between me and him something which annoyed him with me. He went out and did not rest here." Allāh's Messenger found him lying in the mosque and saw that his mantle had slipped from his back and his back was covered with dust.³²

The mosque was used as a welfare centre for the needy and a shelter for the homeless. It was here that donations given by Muslims were collected and distributed to those in need. It was also used as a hospital for Muslim warriors in times of war. The *ṣuffa* people were those homeless emigrants who came from various parts of Arabia to live with the Prophet and learn Islam directly from him. The Prophet and the Muslims would frequently aid these people whenever they could. It was shown in the previous section that there were Muslim reciters who

²⁹ Hasan, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1104, p. 285

³⁰ Siddiqi, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 5239, p. 1155-1156

³¹ Op.cit., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 333, p. 87

³² Siddiqi, Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 5924, p. 1287-1288

studied and work to help the *Ṣuffa* Muslims. The *ḥadīths* concerning the use of the mosque as a welfare centre are as follows:

Narrated Sālim's father: I was a grown up boy and used to sleep in the mosque in the life time of the Prophet (peace be upon him).³³

Narrated Anas: Some people of the tribe of 'Ukl came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and joined the men of As-Suffa. 'Abdul Raḥmān said that the men of As-Suffa were from the poor people.³⁴

'Ā'ishah said: A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) during Ramaḍān in the mosque and said, "Apostle of Allāh, I am ruined! I had sexual intercourse with my wife". The Prophet commanded him to give alms as expiation for his sin. The man said, "I swear by Allāh posses nothing with me". The Prophet commanded him to sit down. While he was waiting, a man came forward driving his donkey loaded with food. The Prophet called for the first man and said, "Give this food as alms." ³⁵

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī reported: A man entered the mosque while the Prophet(peace be upon him) was commanding the people to give their clothes (as alms).³⁶

Narrated Anas': Some goods came to Allāh's Apostle from Baḥrein. The Prophet(peace be upon him) ordered the people to spread them in the mosque- it was the biggest amount of goods that the Prophet had received. he left for prayers and did not even look at it. After the prayer, he sat by those goods and gave from those to everybody he saw. ³⁷

The Prophet's mosque was also used as a place for judicial proceedings and for the punishment of the guilty. These proceedings were performed in public as a social deterrent on crimes. The *ḥadīths* related to this subject are as follows:

³³ Khan, Vol.2, *ḥadīth* no. 222, p. 124

³⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 431, p. 258

³⁵ Hasan, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 2388, p. 657

³⁶ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 1671, p. 440

³⁷ Khan, Vol.1, *ḥadīth* no. 413, p.246

Narrated Sahl bin S'ad: A man said, " O Allāh's Apostle! If a man finds another man with his wife (committing adultery) should the husband kill him?" Later I saw them (the man and his wife) doing Li'ān in the mosque. ³⁸

Abū Huraira narrated: A Muslim came to the Prophet(peace be upon him) while he was in the mosque and confessed that he had committed adultery. The Prophet turned away from him. The Muslim again admitted his guilt in front of the Prophet . The Prophet turned away for four times and finally asked, " Are you mad." He said no. The Prophet asked, "Are you married". He said yes. The Prophet commanded the Companions to take the man and stone him. They stoned him at the mosque.³⁹

Abū Huraira reported: The Muslim captured a man from the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfa and bounded him to one of the pillars of the mosque. (The Prophet questioned him for three days and he was defiant . Finally the Prophet released him . The man converted to Islam). ⁴⁰

The mosque was the centre of administration where the Prophet governed the small Muslim community and consulted his Companions in many matters. The mosque was the Muslim's political centre as the *imām* is the recognised leader of the Muslims. The election of the first Four Pious Caliphs occurred in this mosque. The political dimension of the mosque is essential for the unity of the Islamic brotherhood and the organisation of discharging the many social obligations. The following are a few *ḥadīths* related to this function:

Narrated Anas bin Mālīk that he heard 'Umar's second speech he delivered when he sat on the pulpit on the day following the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). 'Umar recited the Tashah-

³⁸ Ibid., Vol.1, *ḥadīth* no. 415 p. 248

It should be noted that the man merely suspect that his wife was unfaithful and that he has no proof. Li'ān is the formal cursing of each other in front of the judge where the woman would proclaim her innocence and invoke a curse on herself while the husband repeatedly accuse the woman of her guilt and invoke a curse on himself.

³⁹ Siddiqi, Vol. 3 , *ḥadīth* no. 4196, p. 913

⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 4361, p. 962

hud while Abū Bakr was silent and said, " I wish that Allāh's Apostle had outlived all of us . But if Muḥammad is dead, Allāh nevertheless has kept the light amongst you from which you can receive the same guidance as Allāh guided Muḥammad with that. And Abu Bakr is the companion of the Prophet . He is the second of the two in the cave. He is the most entitled person among the Muslims to manage your affairs . Therefore get up and swear allegiance to him." I heard 'Umar saying to Abū Bakr on that day, " Get on the pulpit", and kept urging him till Abū Bakr ascended the pulpit and the people swore their allegiance to him.
41

'Ā'ishah said: The Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) would set up a pulpit in the mosque for Ḥassān who would stand on it and satirize those who spoke against the Prophet. The Prophet would say, " The spirit of holiness (Gabriel) is with Ḥassān so long as he speaks in defence of the Apostle of Allāh . 42

There were many deputations that came to the Prophet's Mosque in Madīna. Most of these came to swear allegiance and accept Islam to the Prophet. There were also those that came for diplomatic discussions and among them was the deputation of Christians from Najran:

A deputation from the Christians of Najrān came to the apostle. There were sixty riders, fourteen of them from their nobles of whom three were in control of affairs..... Mohammad b. Ja'far told me that when they came to Medina they came into the apostle's mosque as he prayed the afternoon prayer clad in Yamanī garments, cloaks and mantles, with the elegance of men of B. al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b. The prophet's companions who saw them that day said that they never saw their like in any deputation that came afterwards. The time of their prayers having come they stood and prayed in the apostle's mosque, and he said that they were to be left to do so. They prayed towards the East. 43

Al-Ash'ath b. Qays came to the apostle with the deputation of Kinda. Al-Zuhrī told me that he came with eighty riders from

41 Khan, Vol. 9 , *ḥadīth* no. 326, p. 248

42 Hasan, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 4997, p.1394

43 Guillaume, p. 270-271

Kinda and they went in to the apostle in the mosque. They had combed their locks and blackened their eyes with *kohl*, and they wore striped robes bordered with silk. The apostle asked them if they have accepted Islam and when they said they had he asked why this silk was around their necks. So they tore it off and threw it away.⁴⁴

There was also a deputation that came to compete with the Prophet in the recitation of poetry. Poetry in the days of the Prophet was not a mere form of art for amusement but also as a form of political statement where the best reciter was honoured as the defender of the tribe. The competition occurred in the mosque of the Prophet. The deputation that came was from the Banu Tamīm. They challenged the Prophet when he was in his private apartments and when he came out, the Banu Tamīm's poet recited some verses emphasising their superiority in strength, numbers and wealth. The Prophet had instructed Thābit b. Qays to answer them and he proclaimed the dignity of Islam and the Prophet. At the same time the Prophet had sent word to Ḥassān b. Thābit who was the official orator and poet of the Prophet and when he came his answer to the poem of the opposition stunned them into submission. The tribe then accepted Islam and the Prophet gave them many gifts to take home.⁴⁵

The Prophet had dispatched many military patrols from the mosque. Discussions of military strategies were held in the mosque and the Prophet went out together with the Muslim armies to defend Islam. The mosque as a military base was also used as the place to treat the wounded and as a temporary shelter for war prisoners:

It was narrated on the authority of 'Ā'isha: Sa'ad was wounded in the Battle of the Ditch. A man from the Quaraish called Ibn al-'Ariqah shot him with an arrow which pierced the artery in the middle of his forearm. The Messenger of Allāh pitched a tent for him in the mosque and would inquire after him being in close proximity.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 641

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 628-631

⁴⁶ Siddiqi, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 4370, p. 966

The mosque was used as the place to detain war captives. The *ḥadīth* below is narrated by an Arab noble who had ran away to Syria when the Prophet defeated his tribe. His name was Ibn Hatim and his sister was one of the captives. His sister had requested that she be freed and to invite her brother to Islam and return to Arabia. The Prophet had consented and provided her with provisions and transport to Syria:

In my absence the apostle's cavalry came and among the captives they took was Ḥātim's daughter, and she was brought to the apostle among the captives of Ṭayyi'. The apostle had heard of my flight to Syria. Ḥātim's daughter was put in the enclosure by the door of the mosque in which the captives were imprisoned and the apostle passed by her. She got up to meet him, for she was a courteous woman, and said, "O apostle of God, my father is dead and the man who should act for me has gone. If you spare me God will spare you." The apostle gave me clothing and put me on a camel and gave me money and I went with them (some trustworthy men of reputation from her people) until I came to Syria. ⁴⁷

The mosque was also used for the performance of prayers and *i'tikāf*. There are several types of prayers which the Prophet had performed in the mosque. They are the obligatory congregational prayers, the individual supererogatory prayers, the congregational supererogatory prayers and the Ṭaḥiyyah al-Masjid Prayer. The Prophet had also performed the act of *i'tikāf* during some of the days of Ramadhān. These *ḥadīths* are not described in this chapter because it is impossible to do so without comprehending the relationship between these rituals and the idea of worship in Islam. They will be the subject of the next chapter.

It can be seen that the mosque of the Prophet was the communal centre of the Muslim. Although there are historians who contest this fact by saying that the activities are in line with the Arab culture who has the 'leader's tent' or '*maḍjlis*', the mosque is certainly more than just an administrative space where as the *maḍjlis* is where only the leaders and important personnel meet to discuss matters of the

⁴⁷ Guillaume, p. 638

tribe. Unlike the Prophet's mosque, common people and children are not allowed to participate in these sessions at the tribal tent. From the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet it can be seen that the initial idea of the mosque is similar to that of the mosque in Makka where it was the main assembly place of the Muslims for a variety of purposes. Western scholars who reject the mosque of the Prophet as a temporary shelter prefer to maintain that the religion was still in its primitive state to merit the building of a specific house of worship or that the Islamic culture at the time of the Prophet was too ignorant of architecture to emphasise a separate building for prayers. It is the unanimous opinion of the Muslims that the Prophet and his generation represent the best model of the Islamic way of life. Since the product of architecture is not solely a technological affair but involves the values and way of life of a culture, the notion that the Muslims were too ignorant or 'uncultured' cannot be accepted completely. They may certainly have been ignorant of building methods but to generalise a culture's attitudes to a wholly Western criteria leaves much to be desired.

4.3.2.2 The Tribal Mosques

There were many mosques in existence aside from the Prophet's Mosque in Madīna. These mosques can be classified on the basis of their origins as the tribal mosque, the military or travel camps, the opposition mosque and the memorial mosque. Most of these mosques were set up by Muslims out of respect for the Prophet and the place where he had rested and made his camps. There are no indications of his command to establish these mosques except those of the tribal ones where he had ordered them to be built and to be perfumed.

Some of these mosque were built by the tribes that came to give allegiance to the Prophet. The tribal mosque was set up for the obvious reason that their camps were too far away from the Madīna Mosque for them to perform the daily congregational prayers. They were mostly set up for the convenience of the tribes as described in the following *ḥadīths*:

Maḥmūd b. al-Rabī' reported that 'Itbān b. Mālīk, who was one of the companions of the Apostle (may peace be upon him) and who participated in the Battle of Badr and was among the Anṣār (of

Medina), told that he came to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) and said: Messenger of Allāh, I have lost my eyesight and I lead the people in prayer. When there is a downpour there is then a current of water in the valley that stands between me and them and I find it impossible to go to their mosque and lead them in prayer. Messenger of Allāh, I earnestly beg of you that you should come and observe prayer at a place of worship (in my house) so that I should then use it as a place of worship." The Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) said, " Well, if God so wills, I would soon do so. 'Itbān said: On the following day, when the day dawned, the Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) came along with Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, and the Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) asked permission to get into the house. I gave him the permission, and he did not sit after entering the house, when he said, " At what place in your house you desire me to say prayer? " I ('Itbān b. Mālik) pointed to a corner in the house. The Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) stood at the place of prayer and pronounced Allāhu Akbar. We too stood behind him, and he said two rak'ahs and then pronounced salutations. We detained him (the Prophet) for the meat curry we had prepared for him. The people of the neighbouring houses came and thus there was a good gathering in our house.⁴⁸

Yahya related to me from Malik that Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Jarir ibn Arik said that Abdullah ibn Umar had come to them in Banu Mu'awiya, one of the villages of the Ansar, and said, " Do you know where the Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, prayed in this mosque of yours? " I told him, " Yes, " and I pointed out a place near where he was. He said, " Do you know the three things for which he made du'a here? ".⁴⁹

There are not many *ḥadīths* that suggests other functions of these mosques except as prayer places and some implications of their use as assembly and education centres.

One of the most interesting accounts about the purpose of the mosque during the Prophet's time ironically can be found in the 'opposition mosque' as mentioned in the previous chapter. The nature of the mosque is clearly outlined by the leaders of the mosque when they

⁴⁸ Op cit., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no: 1384, p. 318-319

⁴⁹ Aisha Abdul Rahman Bewley, *Al-Muwatta Of Imam Malik ibn Anas* (Granada, Spain: Madinah Press, 1992), *ḥadīth* no. 35, p. 82

invited the prophet to 'sanctify' their mosque through his presence and prayer there as in the following *ḥadīth*:

The apostle went on until he stopped in Dhū Awān a town an hour's daylight journey from Medina. The owners of the mosque of opposition had come to the apostle as he was preparing for Tabūk, saying. " We have built a mosque for the sick and needy and for nights of bad weather, and we should like you to come to us and pray for us there". He said that he was on the point of traveling, and was preoccupied, or words to that effect, and that when he came back if God willed he would come to them and pray for them in it.⁵⁰

It is significant to note that some of the functions of the mosque mentioned were as a shelter for the poor and the sick which implies that the mosque serves as well as a welfare institution. The political nature of the mosque was explained in the previous chapter. It is important to note that the Prophet did not forbid the multiple functions of the mosque. Although there is no certainty that the particular mosque was actually used as such, the leaders of the tribes had probably emphasised them.

4.3.2.3 The Memorial Mosque

There were many other mosques established during the Prophet's time. Most of these mosques were, in fact, not established or founded by the Prophet. Most of them can be classified as Memorial Mosques for they were constructed at famous spots where the Prophet had stopped in his travels or in his military campaigns. The *ḥadīth*s below describes a single event where the mosque was established in the siege of the city of Tā'if shortly after the liberation of Makka:

He (the Prophet) went on until he halted near al-Ṭā'if and pitched his camp there. Some of his companions were killed by arrows there because the camp had come too close to the wall of al-Ṭā'if and the arrows were reaching them. The Muslims could not get through the wall for they had fastened the gate. When these men were killed by arrows he withdrew and pitched his camp near where his mosque stands today. He besieged them for some twenty days. He had two of his wives. He struck two tents for them and

⁵⁰ Guillaume, p. 609

prayed between the tents. Then he stayed there. When Thaqīf surrendered 'Amr b. Umayya b. Wāḥb b. Mu'attib b. Malik built a mosque over the place where he prayed.⁵¹

Then he (the Prophet) raided the Qurasyh. He went by the way of B. Dīnār, then by Fayfā'ul-a-Khabār, and halted under a tree in the valley of Ibn Azhar called Dhātu'l-Sāq. There he prayed and there is his mosque. Food was prepared and they all ate there.⁵²

There are two important points about the *ḥadīths*. Firstly it was natural for the Prophet to establish a place where he would pray the shortened congregational prayers, as his head quarters for him and his Companions to discuss military strategies and also probably as a hospital for the wounded just like his mosque in Madīna. The mosque, thus, was meant to be as a temporary space constructed probably using tents or merely outlined by some markings on the ground. As with any traveling Muslim who makes use of any clean ground for prayers temporarily, the mosque can also be as mobile as such and does not require any sanctified ground. The second important point is that a building was constructed to honour the Prophet and the event by the Muslims when the Prophet had left the siege or the short travel stop. It is important to mention that there are no indication in the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet condoning such an idea as the memorial mosque. Usually when a permanent structure is built to be used as a mosque it should obviously be at places where there are settlers and inhabitants for them to populate the building. The Prophet's Sunna does not condone the building of non-utilitarian structures for the purpose of commemorating the many stops he had made during his travels and military campaigns. This attitude can be traced to his strong feelings about the nature of tombs and shrines. Nevertheless, the mosque near Tā'if was built and as it was close to the city's fort, the inhabitants can certainly benefit from it.

As with the military mosques quoted above, the Prophet had established mosques wherever he had stayed for several days with a tribe. The mosque of Qubā is said to be the first mosque in Islam and was established during his flight from Makka to Madīna as described in the following *ḥadīth*:

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 589

⁵² Ibid., p. 285

The apostle stayed in Qubā' among B. 'Amr b. 'Auf from Monday to Thursday and then he laid the foundation of his mosque. Then God brought him out from them on a Friday. The B. 'Amr allege that he stayed longer with them, and God knows the truth of the matter. Friday prayer found the apostle among B. Sālim b. 'Auf and he prayed in the mosque which is in the bottom of the Wādī Rānūnā.⁵³

It was obviously a place where he would establish prayer but also served as an education and a political centre for the Prophet to plan his missions. One of the reasons for his stop at Qubā might have been to wait for the intelligence reports of his pursuit and the political situation of the city of Madīna before he makes his arrival as the new leader of the city.

It can, thus, be observed that the nature of the other mosques during the Prophet's lifetime is similar to the Prophet's mosque in Madīna. There was no attempt to emphasise the building as the specific place of ritual worship over that of The Muslims' gathering place and welfare centre. One reason this is so is the mostly due to the nature of Islam where there are no specific priesthood elite to make the mosque their special domain. The Muslims serve as the people that must develop their own Islamic community which requires strong political and social planning. The mosque serves as an excellent place of social assembly as the people must meet to establish the five daily prayers.

4.3.3 The Prophet's Sayings about Mosques

The problem of mosque architecture would be greatly simplified if there were as many sayings about its purpose as the number of *ḥadīths* relating to the activities that it had served. Unfortunately there are only a few *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet had mentioned anything regarding the mosque. Most of these are in reference to the rewards for building and being attached to the mosque in the context of Muslim piety. These *ḥadīths* allude little to the purpose of the mosque meant by the Prophet. There are also *ḥadīths* which relate to the idea of sanctity of the mosque in relation to the concept of purity in Islam. Since these *ḥadīths* relate directly to the idea of the ritual of ablution which is

⁵³ Ibid., 228

essential for the performance of prayers, their discussion is treated in the next chapter. The other *ḥadīths* which comprise the sayings of the Prophet relate to the ideas about architectural symbolism of mosques and their sanctity related to death and the construction of memorial mosques.

The first *ḥadīth* relates to the earth as the mosque for the Muslim as follows:

Narrated Jābir bin 'Abdullāh: The Prophet said, " The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of prayer is due.⁵⁴

The *ḥadīth* can be interpreted mainly as an indication that the whole earth is sacred to Muslims with the exception of certain places that possess a greater sanctity such as the sites of the Sacred Mosques in Islam. The *ḥadīth* may also imply the difference of Islam against the present state of the world religions at the time which requires 'intermediaries' of sacred artifacts, idols, buildings and 'holy' priests for the salvation of an individual's soul.

The next important *ḥadīth* is more specific in outlining the purpose of the mosque as indicated in the following narration:

Anas bin Mālik reported: While we were in the mosque with Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him), a desert Arab came and urinated in the mosque. The Companions shouted for him to stop but the Prophet forbade them and waited until the desert Arab finish urinating. When he had finished the Prophet called him and said: (the narrator is unsure of the exact words), " These mosques are not the place for urine and filth but are only for the remembrance of Allāh, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'ān." He then poured water over the urine.⁵⁵

The key words in the *ḥadīth* are that the mosque is meant for the purposes of 'the remembrance of Allāh, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'ān'. Taken literally and in isolation to other *ḥadīths*, the whole

⁵⁴ Khan, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 331, p. 199

⁵⁵ Siddiqui, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 559, p. 169

concept of Islam and the meanings of prayer, *dhikr* and Qur'ānic recital, the perfect stereotyped house of worship is clearly implied in this *ḥadīth*. However, a single *ḥadīth* cannot be taken to be the sole basis for theorising about the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque in Islam. There are two important points that must be born in mind when interpreting the *ḥadīth*. Firstly, it should be emphasised that the meanings of the three rituals implied in the *ḥadīth* must be understood in their own context in relation to the meaning of Islam as a way of life. This aspect of the discussion is dealt with in the next chapter. Secondly, it should be noted that the Prophet was admonishing kindly a Bedouin who had no idea of Islamic hygiene. Some Muslim scholars have quoted this *ḥadīth* as an indication that the mosque is sacred and its cleanliness must be preserved well and above that of other buildings. Just because the Prophet had forbidden the act of urinating in the mosque compound does not make the Muslim house less sacred or in any way imply that its defilement is acceptable in Islam. The safest assumption concerning this *ḥadīth* is that the mosque is a special building as sacred as anyone's domain where aspects of hygiene and cleanliness must be observed at all times for the sake of spiritual and physical purity. The same argument can be applied to the *ḥadīth* mentioned below:

'Ā'ishah said: The Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) commanded us to build mosques in different localities (in the locality of each tribe) and that they should be kept clean and perfumed. ⁵⁶

Since the mosque is the place of public congregation where the people arrive mostly in dusty conditions and in a less than clean physical state, the need to perfume may be related to hygienic and comfort reasons rather than to a sacred purpose. The hygienic reasons can also be reinforced through the Prophet's command for the Muslims to bathe before coming to the Friday Prayers.

Although there are not many sayings about the purpose of the mosque, there are a few *ḥadīths* that may shade some light to this subject by suggesting what the mosque is not. The first *ḥadīth* relates to

⁵⁶ Hassan, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 455, p. 118

the subject of tomb building and this matter has been discussed thoroughly in the previous chapter:

Narrated 'Urwa: 'Āisha said," The Prophet in his illness said,'Allāh cursed the Jews and the Christians because they took the graves of their Prophets as places for praying'. " 'Āisha added," Had it not been for that the grave of the Prophet would have been made prominent but I am afraid it might be taken as a place for praying."⁵⁷

The opinion of Sidi Gazalba is worth emphasising here. He had clearly indicated that associating the mosque with the tombs or mausoleums of so called 'saints' of Islam particularly popular among the Shī'a and Ṣūfī Muslims upsets the balance of the 'religious' aspect of the mosque. Gazalba meant that the mosque would be able to function as the centre of Islamic culture because its scope has been limited to the solemn rituals associated with death. In the Sunnī orthodoxy the practice of tomb building is totally prohibited by the strength of this sayings and the authority of the Prophet's practice. The prohibition includes also the construction of tombs in the mosque. It cannot be denied that even among the orthodox Sunnīs there are cases such as in Malaysia where the tombs of national heroes are buried within the mosque compound under the *ijtihād* that it is permissible because the true part of the mosque is the prayer space and not the compound itself. This is in direct contrast to the practice of the Muslims in Saudi Arabia where even the tombs of Kings are unmarked in any grandiose fashion much less including them in the area of the mosques. It is clear from the discussion in the previous chapter that it is not within the spirit of Islam to associate tomb buildings and mosques.

Another *ḥadīth* about this subject is more specific in its criticism of a particular type of house of worship:

Narrated 'Āisha : Um Ḥabība and Um Salama mentioned about a church they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were pictures. They told the Prophet about it , of which he said," If any religious man dies amongst those people they would build a place of worship at his grave and make these pictures in it. They will be the

⁵⁷ Khan, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 414, p.232

The reference to the house of worship in this *ḥadīth* can be ascertained to be churches. The two aspects of the buildings that was criticised by the Prophet were the building of churches on or at the graves of the 'saints' and that these buildings had 'pictures' in them. Although this *ḥadīth* was in reference to the subject of building tombs and mausoleums, it relates directly to the nature of the mosque in Islam. At that particular time in history when the Prophet had uttered these words most of the houses of worship were places where icons in the form of paintings and sculptures of Gods, saints and kings were housed in these buildings. The buildings had performed the dual role as houses of rituals and as sacred shelters for these icons. These buildings were maintained by an elite group of priests who controlled not only the performance of the rituals but the dogmas of the religions. The importance and strength of these priests lie in the society's glorification of the deity and the images of the holy personages and it was through the grandeur of architecture and art that this message was imparted to the masses. The Prophet's criticism can be interpreted not only at the level of art and architecture but also at the very institution of these religions themselves. Islam prohibits the Muslims from venerating any human being including the Prophet himself. The Prophet is a teacher and his physical self is not sacred but totally human and calls no need for veneration. Islam forbids even the glorification of angels for they are but beings of a different nature and holds no key to the salvation of mankind. The prohibition of images of God, the Prophets, the Companions and the angels in specific houses of worship is not a mere act or fear on the part of the Prophet that the Arabs may turn back to idol worship but the fear that society may over sanctify the persons of the Prophets and their Companions to the point where they are themselves worshipped or confused with the concept of Godhood in Islam. In a way the *ḥadīth* points to a different idea of a Muslim house of worship than those of churches or temples of other religions.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 419, p. 251

There is a group of *ḥadīths* that is most important to be considered in relation to the nature of the mosque. The message of these *ḥadīths* are as prophecies and warnings to Muslims:

Narrated Abū Huraira: One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (a strange man) the angel Gabriel came and asked.....(many things) . When will the Hour be established (Doomsday)?The Prophet answered," The answerer has no better knowledge than the Questioner. But I will inform you about the portents:

1. when a slave lady gives birth to her master
2. when the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings. And the Hour is one of Five things which nobody knows except Allāh." ⁵⁹

'I was not commanded to build high mosques' ⁶⁰

'One of the portents of the Day of Judgment is that you will vie with one another in building mosques.' ⁶¹

In the first *ḥadīth* the important reference here is the competition among Muslims in the construction of 'higher' buildings. Although the *ḥadīth* does not include specifically any reference about mosques, it can safely be assumed that the mosque was included in this statement if the second *ḥadīth* were considered. The third *ḥadīth* merely emphasises the aspect of competition among Muslims in building mosques and other construction. There are two important question with regards to this group of *ḥadīths*. Firstly, are the *ḥadīths* meant as a prophecy or as a warning? Secondly, what is the nature of the term 'high' in this context? The answer to the first question is that the *ḥadīths* serve both as a prophecy and as a warning to the Muslims. In his lifetime the Prophet had made many prophecies that had come true such as the fall of the Roman and Persian empire, the grisly death of his grandson at Karbalā' the social conditions of the Muslims in the time of the Pious Caliphs and the shism and wars between Muslims. Another group of *ḥadīths* of

⁵⁹ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 47, p. 42

⁶⁰ James Robson, *Mishkat Al-Masabih*, (Lahore, Pakistan: SH. Mohammad Ashraf, 1973) Vol. 1, page 148.

⁶¹ Ibid.

prophecy concerns the signs of the end of the world. This group of *ḥadīths* is divided into two categories. The first category consists of the prophecy about the early signs of the end of the world and the other categories deals with the final signs of the Day of Resurrection. The above *ḥadīths* are categorised as in the first classification. An important question that may be posed here is what use the *ḥadīths* to present day Muslims if it were but a mere prophecy that would inevitably come true? The Muslim believes that no one person knows the exact time of the Day of Judgment and the end of the world. One of Islam's principle of life is never to give up and that Muslims must strive to overcome changes for the better simply because the end of the world may not come in their lifetime or in fact in another hundred lifetimes ahead. It is for this reason that these *ḥadīths* can then be considered as a warning of the signs of some Muslims in power transgressing the limits of the Islamic *Sharī'a*. These are the signs for the true Muslims to act and remind the society of its transgression beyond the spirit of the *Qur'ān* and the Sunna. In the aspect of mosque building and institution the sign of decadence is recorded by the words of the Prophet in the competition of 'high buildings and mosques'.

It is important now to consider the second question about the nature of the 'high buildings'. It can safely be assumed that the word high does not in any way indicate some kind of sacred measurement because there is no mention of any 'magic' numbers in the *Qur'ān* or the Sunna. The only mysterious numbers associated with the idea of the sacred in Islam are the number of *rak'as* in prayers and the recitation of certain formulas in the *dhikr*. These cannot be explained by any 'rational' methods and are taken purely on faith alone. In architecture there are no such symbolism of sanctity from the *ḥadīths* or the *Qur'ān*. However, the Prophet had mentioned in several *ḥadīths* on aspects of wastefulness and non-utility. The spirit of Islam is that one should use the comforts of this life not to the point of extremism. The attempts by Muslim designers to aggrandise their buildings in aping the tradition of the Western perception of beauty and aesthetic in architecture can be interpreted as the main subject of these *ḥadīths*. It is obvious that the term 'high mosques' in this respect can be interpreted to mean beyond the need of utility. It is known that during that time buildings built by the Greeks, Romans, Persians and the Christians are known to the Prophet

through his travels in the trade caravans when he was a child and during his early manhood. The Western tradition of the Romans and Greeks of glorifying objects of beauty such as sculpture and architecture find no place in the Arab mind and the Prophet found even less use for these requirements. It is only a matter of opinion that some scholars have interpreted this attitude as 'primitive' or 'uncultured'. It is unjustified to judge a culture by some arbitrary criteria of 'civilisation' when that particular culture does not subscribe to it. The attitude of the Prophet, being an Arab and the Messenger, must be carefully understood. There are many customs in the Arab civilisation that the Prophet found to be compatible to the Muslim faith such as the acts of the *'aḳīka* which is the slaughter of an animal on the birth of a child, *ṭawāf* or the circumambulation of the Ka'ba, the respectable dress code and many others. Islam has a value system that limits the scope of 'pride' and 'utility' in the presentation of art and architecture. A building built for the sake of rivalry in its appearance to the buildings of other cultures finds no basis in this value system. Although scholars such as Creswell or Gohary has quoted the jurists opinion as permitting this aspect of Islam, these religious verdicts are highly suspect because they may have been pronounced on behalf of certain caliph's sake. These religious verdicts are non binding to the Muslims of any other age. Thus, it can be observed from the above discussion that the *ḥadīths* are meant to indicate the decadence of the Islamic spirit. A very strong suggestion is the warning that the Muslim civilisation will have transgressed the limits of the Sunna in competing or aping the Western world in most of its cultural values without firstly examining the spirit of Islam embodied in the *Qur'ān*, the Sunna of the Prophet and the *sunna* of the generation of Companions.

The only conclusion that can be suggested from the above discussion is that the idea of the mosque seems to be entirely different than the idea of churches or any other house of worship built at that time.

4.4 Summary and Conclusion

The *ḥadīths* reinforce two of the conclusions suggested in the previous chapter. The first suggestion is that the initial concept of the

mosque should never be associated with the idea of a memorial building for either its symbolic or its ritual significance. The fact that the memorial mosques were built to commemorate the sites of the Prophet's stops in his travels and military campaigns does not offer a strong indication that the Prophet had approved of their construction. This was because most of these buildings were built after the demise of the Prophet. Even though some were built during his lifetime with his knowledge and that he was silent on this matter, does not necessarily indicate that he had approved of their construction.

The *ḥadīths* have also reinforced the idea of the mosque as an important socio-political centre. The *ḥadīths* which describe the socio-political functions of the Ka'ba suggests that the idea of the mosque, even in pre-Islamic times, was more than a place of ritual. When the Prophet built his own mosque in Madīna, this idea was still present and he has even added many other functions to the mosque.

The *ḥadīths* also suggests several other functions related to the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque. One of the first important functions of the mosque is as an education centre for the community. The *ḥadīths* indicates several types of education method found in the mosque of the Prophet. The Prophet had taught both Muslim men and women at the mosque on several different occasions. Although there is no indication of education for the children, their presence in the mosque can infer their indirect involvement in the learning process. The idea of the live-in education complex was inherent in the mosque of the Prophet where the 'people of *ṣuffa*' represented the first kind of students to live and study at the mosque. Although the popular contention that the *ṣuffa* Muslims were mostly homeless and that the mosque provides a permanent shelter for them, some scholars such as Maulana Muhammad Ali suggests that not all of them were poor or homeless and that the sole intention of these Muslims was to study at the mosque. The *ṣuffa* space in the mosque then is not only a shelter for the homeless and poor, it was also a kind of boarding house of education.

A second function associated with the idea of the mosque is its importance as a centre for the welfare of the community. This is illustrated by the presence of shelter for the poor, homeless and the

travelers and the centre for the distribution of goods or *zakāt* to the poor members of the Muslim community.

The *ḥadīths* also points to the use of the mosque as a social centre. The Prophet's mosque was the venue for social and informal meetings between Muslims and the place to stage celebrations, simple amusements, sports and recreational activities. These activities are important to strengthen the Islamic brotherhood and breaks down further any racial, financial or nationalistic barriers among the people in the community. In the time of the Prophet the single enemy of Islamic unity was the strong feelings of tribal relationships. The Prophet had managed to eliminate tribal loyalties and had substituted it for loyalty to Allāh the Prophet and the Muslim brotherhood.

The administrative and political aspect of the idea of the mosque have been emphasised in another place in this chapter. The judicial function of the mosque in administering the laws, mediating disputes and inflicting punishments must be added to this role of the mosque. The idea of providing judicial proceedings in a mosque is natural to the Muslims where it was the centre of gathering of the community and what better place to administer the laws of God than at a place directly associated with Islam.

The presence of tribal mosques in the Prophet's time suggests the idea that the size of the mosque and the congregation should be small enough for strengthening the brotherhood among the community around the mosque. Although the *ḥadīths* specifically mention that the reasons for the existence of the tribal mosques was more for convenience sake with respect to distance and hardship in traveling, the proliferation of this type of mosque in the Muslim cities may indicate an important idea of neighborhood in Islam. This important aspect of the mosque *qaryah* or the mosque community is discussed in greater detail in the final part of this thesis.

The sayings of the Prophet with respect to the building of memorial mosques, mosque adornments and high mosques suggest the idea that the mosque was never meant to be portrayed as a monumental symbol of grandeur. The mosques in the history of Islam can be divided into those which posses such an architectural characteristic and those that do not. The architectural historians of mosques have emphasised only the former in their documentation of Islamic architecture. The

thousands of mosques which were built into the urban fabric of the Muslim cities are not documented and discussed adequately. The idea of the tribal mosques and the non-emphasis on the monumental symbolism of mosques are important considerations toward developing the eternal idea of the mosque in Islam.

Amidst all the suggestions on what constitute the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque, the analysis of the *ḥadīths* proves inconclusive on the aspect of sanctity and the relationship between prayers and *dhikr* to the mosque. The problem relating to the aspect of sanctity of the mosque is brought about by the practice of *i'tikāf* and the concept of ritual purity in Islam. These *ḥadīths* cannot be analysed in isolation from the understanding of what the meaning and purpose of worship in Islam are. The next chapter presents these issues in the light of the meaning of Islam and its concept of worship.

Chapter Five

THE IDEA OF THE MOSQUE IN RELATION TO THE MEANING OF 'IBĀDĀT, RITUAL PURITY, ṢALĀT, I'KTIKĀF, DHIKR, ḲUR'ĀNIC RECITATION AND FUNERARY RITES IN ISLAM

Introduction

The mosque is commonly associated with the performance of religious rituals particularly that of prayer. However, there are many other religious rituals normally performed in the mosque which most architectural scholars fail to identify. Aside from prayer, the religious rituals associated with the mosque are those of *i'tikāf*, Ḳur'ānic recitation, dhikr, and funeral rituals. In this chapter the meaning of these rituals is examined and the idea of mosque sanctity in relation to the meaning of purity is discussed along with the implications for the idea of the initial concept and eternal ideas of the mosque in Islam. Each of these rituals is described and analysed in different sections with the single exception of dhikr which is described together with the ritual of Ḳur'ānic recitation. However, before proceeding to the description and analysis of these rituals, it is necessary to understand the meaning of worship in Islam. This is important because all of the above rituals are part of the practice of worship and they must be understood within the framework of the meaning and purpose of worship in Islam as a whole.

5.1 The Meaning of Worship in Islam

Worship is an essential part of most religions. The idea of religious worship in the present time is usually associated with ritual acts performed to glorify or supplicate to a deity. In some religions, worship is limited in definition to a certain set of ritual performed at specific places and sometimes by special persons such as priests or religious leaders. It is important to understand clearly the Islamic meaning of worship in interpreting the meanings and purposes of Islamic 'religious architecture'. In ascertaining the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque, it is critical to clearly differentiate between the definition of worship as understood from the modern and other religious perspective and that of Islam. However, before proceeding to the description of the definition, place, type and characteristics of worship in Islam, it is important to understand the meaning of 'religion' in Islam.

5.1.1 The Meaning of Religion in Islam

The word Islam means simply 'submission to the will of Allāh' as implied by the following Qur'anic Verse:

"Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to God, does good and follows the way of Abraham the true in faith? For God did take Abraham for a friend."¹

"Do they seek for other than the religion of God?- while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will and to Him shall they all be brought back."²

Maududi explains that all creations, including man, submits naturally to the will of Allāh as they follow certain immutable biological, physical and chemical patterns in life. This indicate that all creations are not independent and their very survival depend on the sustenance provided

¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Quran: Translation And Commentary (Maryland: Amana Corp, 1983), Verse 125, Surā 4, p. 219

² Ibid., Surā 3, Verse 83, p.144

by God in life.³ It is only man who Allāh has given the ability to think and decide his own fate by his free will. He may choose to live according to the pattern set by God or against this pattern. If he ignores God then he is violating the natural pattern of success provided by God vouchsafed through His Prophets of the past. Muslims believe that all religions that teach man about goodness are the patterns and rules brought about by God's prophets in the past.⁴ Religions differ from one another due to the different social and historical conditions at the time. Islam also maintains that the religions differ from one another to the point of contradicting each other because the followers have altered the initial divine messages to suit their selfish desires. Islam is not only related to Christianity and Judaism but also to other great religions of the world. Islam criticises these religions in so far as their suspected changes by priests and religious scholars who have lowered the status of man in driving him to acts of inhuman extremes. Muslims view Islam as the last and final message of all the prophets (peace be upon them). The Qur'ān is the final revelation complete with a model code of life exemplified by the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

The basic principles of Islam are as follows.⁵ God is the Creator, Sustainer and Administrator of the universe and all that it contains. Man is given the will by God to choose his own path of salvation. Man was created as His vicegerent in this world and in order to fulfill this responsibility, he must follow the conditions and pattern of life determined by God. The conditions of the successful way of life was inspired to the prophets (peace be upon them) who came to various societies throughout history. These prophets were the true guides for man in their own societies. The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was the seal of the prophets and with his arrival all the previous messages and practices were confirmed and completed and all the rituals abrogated in place of the final ones taught by him. With his demise all Muslims are instructed by God and His Prophet to call all man to the path of Islam. The Muslims are not allowed to practice their religion in

³ Abul A'la Maududi, Let Us Be Muslims, edited by Khuram Murrad, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1992) pp.137-138

⁴ Khurshid Ahmad Islam: The essentials, in Islam - Its Meaning and Message (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1992), p. 26

⁵ Abu Urwah, Risalah Usrah: Jilid I (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Salam, 1988), pp. 33-43

seclusion but to be the active participant in the Islamic community working towards establishing the word of Islam to the rest of humanity. The Muslims are given the task and responsibility to carry the message to all the four corners of the globe and where they meet any resistance to the free expression of this message, the Muslims are required to dominate and overcome this resistance. It must be understood that there is no coercion in Islam. The Muslims declare war only with the powers that resist the propagation of its message. Finally, when the Muslim dies, he is subjected to an examination of the responsibilities laid upon him and if found adequate he will be admitted to Heaven but if the responsibilities are wanting in their performance, he will be punished in Hell. The Muslim's life in the world of the living is but a trial of his devotion to God. It is important to understand that all the activities and actions described above are considered as part of the meaning of worship in Islam.

5.1.2 The Meaning of 'Ibādāt in Islam

The main purpose of the Muslim in this life is to worship Allāh The Most High. This purpose is clearly stated in the following Qur'ānic Verse:

"And (tell them that) I have not created the invisible beings and men to any end other than that they may (know and) worship Me."⁶

Abu Urwah explains that the word worship is a loose translation of the word ' *ibādāt* '.⁷ The word ' *ibādāt* ' is a derivative of the root word ' *abd* ' meaning 'slave'. ' *Ibādāt* ' then is interpreted as the absolute obedience of the slave by following the rules and regulations of the master. The slave, in this respect follows the master out of love, respect and fear of the master. The slave must centre all his actions in life towards the unquestioned obedience to his master.

⁶ Muhammad Asad, The Message Of The Quran. (Gibraltar: Dar-Al-Andalus, 1980), Surā 51, Verse 56, p. 806

⁷ Op cit., pp. 43-55. It should be mentioned that Abu Urwah interprets the concept of Islam and ' *ibādāt* ' using the explanations given by Abul Ala Maududi, Syed Qutb, and Hassan al-Banna .

There are basically two types of worship that are not separate by themselves but interrelated closely with one another. The first type is the ritual worship and the second is the non-ritual worship. The ritual worship in Islam are such as prayer, ablution, recitation of the *Ḳur'ān*, fasting and many others. The non-ritual worship are such as charity, forbidding the evil and encouraging the good in society, *djihād*, obtaining knowledge and many others. It must be emphasised that Islam does not consider a Muslim to be successful if he or she merely performs the ritual worship in great amount but neglect the responsibilities of the non-ritual worship. This fact is best explained in the following *Ḳur'ānic* Verses:

"True piety does not consist of turning your faces towards the East or West - but truly pious is he who believes in God, and the Last Day, and the Angels, and revelation, and the prophets; and spend his substance- however much he himself may cherish it upon his near of kin, and the orphans and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and the freeing of human beings from bondage; and is constant in prayer, and renders the purifying dues; and (truly pious are) they who keep their promises whenever they promise, and are patient in misfortune and hardship and in time of peril: it is they that have proved themselves true, and it is they , they who are conscious of God."⁸

"It does not behove the people of the (Prophet's) City and the Bedouin (who live) around them to hold back from following God's Apostle, or to care for their own selves more than for him, for whenever they suffer from thirst or weariness or hunger in God's cause, and whenever they take any steps which confounds those who deny the truth and whenever there comes to them from the enemy whatever may be destined for them (whenever anything thereof comes to pass) a good deed is recorded in their favour. Verily, God does not fail to requite the doers of good. And whenever they spend anything (for the sake of God) be it little or much, and whenever they move on earth (in God's cause)- it is recorded in their favour, and God will grant them the best reward for all that they have been doing." ⁹

⁸ Asad, *Surā 2*, Verse 177, p. 36

⁹ *Ibid.*, *Surā 9*, Verse 120-121, pp.284-285

Both these types of worship must be performed by all Muslims for Islam possesses no institution of clergy or priesthood. All Muslims are held individually accountable by God in the performance of these responsibilities.

Abu Urwah describes the characteristics of worship in Islam as follows. Worship in Islam is meant solely for Allāh The Most High and to no other deity. The concept of submission to a deity is not restricted to only the transcendental kind but includes giving loyalty to a country, government, person or culture. If a Muslim professes loyalty to any other form of deity except Allāh The Most High he or she is described as committing '*shirk*' and is no longer considered as a Muslim. It is for this very reason that the Muslim must strive to change the political system of his country to a one which the *Ḳur'ān* and the *Sunna* form its fundamental basis.¹⁰

There are several important characteristics of worship in Islam. Firstly, all forms of worship must be sincerely intended for the sake of Allāh The Most High. Purity of intention is foremost in Islam because an action is not judged solely by the execution of the action itself but most importantly by the sincerity of intention. Secondly, the Muslim requires no intermediary in the performance of all types of worship. This is the reason why there is no priesthood in Islam. In certain Muslim societies, people elevate their '*ulamā*' or religious scholars to the level of priesthood. The Shī'a Muslims are well known for propagating the concept of intermediary for they consider that these religious clerics have a very special position with God. The Ṣūfī Muslims are another group that subscribes to this concept by claiming their teachers as saints who have the power of intercession in life and in death. The Sunnī Muslim considers the concept of intermediary as a serious innovation contradicting the pure spirit of Islam.

Thirdly, worship in Islam does not require the presence of any type of idol, liturgical furniture or building. Aside from the ritual of *ḥaḍj*, the Muslim can perform the ritual worship anywhere except the prohibited places such as places of physical filth and the graveyard.

¹⁰ The concept of deity or object of worship is discussed in detail by Abu Urwah in the *Risalah Usrah* in the chapter on the concept of 'Tauhid' pages 9-32

Finally, worship in Islam is unique in the sense that it incorporates all actions performed for the sake of Allāh. Islam does not limit the scope of worship solely to the acts of ritual devotions such as prayers, fasting or recitation of the *Ḳur'ān* but includes every conceivable action that may benefit the individual, society and the environment within the bounds of the Islamic *Sharī'a*. Abu Urwah has outlined five conditions of these actions.¹¹ Firstly, the actions must not be in contradiction to the Islamic laws relating to the society and the individual. Secondly the actions must be made with the most sincere intentions for the good of the family, society and mankind as a whole and with due consideration for the environment and all life. Thirdly, the actions must be made in the best possible manner and not half heartedly. Fourthly, the actions must not cause undue harm to others whether emotionally or physically. Finally the actions should not be made with the result of neglect of the ritual worship such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, charity and others.

What are the implications of the meaning of worship in Islam to the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque? Firstly, it was shown that the practice of worship is not limited to only those of the ritual kind like prayers or fasting. In this sense, if the mosque in Islam is considered as the place of worship, then it follows that the functions of the mosque may include many functions related to both kinds of worship in Islam and not just prayer alone. Secondly, it was explained that worship in Islam which includes the ritual worship can be performed anywhere without restriction of place or with the presence of any furniture or objects. From the perspective of architecture, in a sense, the mosque, with the exception of the three Sacred Mosques, is literally 'unnecessary' for the purposes of worship. On the other hand it can be seen that the mosque is necessary only as a matter of convenience for worship. Thus, in order to ascertain the initial concept and eternal ideas of the mosque in relation to the meaning of worship in Islam, it is necessary to examine the meaning and purpose of both the ritual worship and non-ritual worship which directly and indirectly relate to the purpose of the mosque in Islam.

¹¹ Ibid., pp.49-55

The implications of the ritual worship on the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque is examined in the following sections. The implications of the non-ritual worship particularly those directly concerned with the responsibilities of the Muslim to the community is treated in the next chapter.

5.2 The Idea of Purity and its Implications on Mosque Sanctity

The idea of purity is related directly to the state of physical and spiritual cleanliness before the performance of various ritual worship in Islam. Since the mosque is the venue for some of these acts it is necessary to comprehend whether the state of purity is a necessary condition when a Muslim is in the mosque. The issue, thus, relates directly to the idea of mosque sanctity. However before ascertaining this condition, it is essential to understand the meaning and practice of the ritual ablution.

5.2.1 The Ritual Ablution and types of Ritual Defilement

Before the commencement of any ritual act such as prayer, reciting the *Qur'ān* or circumambulating the Ka'ba, the Muslim must perform the ritual ablution. The ritual ablution is also recommended in some non-ritual acts. Before performing the ritual ablution, the Muslim must be in a state of physical cleanliness. There are two types of defilement in Islam which can be categorised as physical and spiritual defilement. The Muslim must ensure a state of physical cleanliness by removing any form of filth which may be discerned by smell or sight. The state of spiritual defilement occurs in a Muslim man and woman during sexual intercourse. It also occurs in a Muslim man whenever there is an emission of semen from the sexual organ. The state of menstruation for women is also categorised as a defilement where she is not allowed to perform the prayer until the state has passed. To be in a state of Islamic cleanliness before the performance of the ritual ablution, the Muslim is required to take the 'Bath of *Janaba*' which is simply bathing every part of the body with water. It must be mentioned here that Islam does not consider the acts of sexual intercourse as an impure

action neither does it condemn women as 'filthy' in every sense of the word because of her menstrual cycle. A proof of this is that women are exempted from performing prayers during this period and are freed from having to make up for the lost prayers. There is no condition for a Muslim man not to perform prayers or to be freed from its performance which indicates Allāh's Mercy on the Muslim woman since the Muslim must constantly be in gratitude and worship Allāh The Most Compassionate at least five times a day. During this period, women are not allowed to recite the *Qur'ān* but may remember Allāh through other formula of recitations that are not considered as *Qur'ānic* verses. All their good actions towards the family and community, if performed for the sake of Allāh The Most High, are still recorded as rewards in His sight.

The ritual ablution is performed with water. In the modern plumbing system the use of tap water to perform ablution is common in Muslim countries. However, it must be stressed that this is considered as one of the most wasteful methods. A more economical one is the use of a sizable pool of water where it is permissible for any number of Muslim to perform without a reduction of a single drop of water from the pool. There is a minimum amount of water for the containment determined by the jurists. The ablution procedure begins with the washing of the face (Figure 13). Next the arms are washed up to the elbows. The head is washed next by lightly rubbing the roots of the hair at a small section of the scalp. Finally, the feet are washed up to the ankles. The actions must be performed in the sequence mentioned. There are reports that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) have rubbed water on his head dress without removing it and also his leather stockings without taking them off. This allowance is given in specific situations such as during travel or in a cold climate or because of fear of disease to the two parts of the body. If there is no water available, the Muslim must perform the *tayammum* which is the ritual ablution using clean dust or sand. The manner of performance is by lightly touching the sand or dust with the palm of both hands and rubbing them lightly on the face and forearms. Finally it must be mentioned that the ritual ablution may be performed at one's home but it is more convenient to perform it in a mosque. However the ritual ablution at home carries more merit for one is rewarded as if in prayer during the journey to pray at the mosque.



Figure 13 - The Rites of Ablution. The sequence of washing is from the right side of this page.

It is important, nevertheless, to provide facilities for ablution in the mosque. The ritual ablution must be repeated before any prayer is performed if one becomes defiled by either answering the call

of nature, breaking wind, contracting a physical or spiritual defilement as mentioned previously.

It can be observed that the ritual ablution is not particularly meant for the purpose of physical cleanliness. The necessity of the physical cleanliness is ensured by the purification rites before performing the ritual ablution. Furthermore, the rites of ablution by *tayammum* using dry sand or dust strengthen the notion that the ablution is an act of spiritual purification. Finally, one can understand the significance of spiritual purification in the supplication formula during the ritual ablution contained in the following *ḥadīth*:

Abū Huraira reported : The Messenger of Allāh(may peace be upon him) said: When a bondsman-a Muslim or a Believer-washes his face(in course of ablution), every sin he contemplated with his eyes will be washed away from his face along with water, or with the last drop of water; when he washes his hands, every sin they wrought will be effaced from his hands with the water, or with the last drop of water; and when he washes his feet, every sin towards which his feet have walked will be washed away with the water, or with the last drop of water, with the result that he comes out pure from sins.¹²

There is no *ḥadīth* found to the extent of the sources used in the thesis to indicate the meaning or purpose of the ritual ablution. We propose that since it is not the act of physical purification the ritual ablution serves as the first stage of a Muslim's spiritual break between the worldly concerns of life in order to prepare himself for the final break so as to be in spiritual communion with Allāh The Most High in the performance of prayers. The second level of spiritual break happens when the Muslim perform a brief Prayer of Ablution which is considered by jurists as a non-obligatory prayer but which the Companions of the Prophet were fond of doing such as in the following *ḥadīth*:

Abū Huraira reported that Allāh's Messenger(may peace be upon him) said to Bilāl: Bilāl, narrate to me which act at the time of morning prayer you did in Islam for which you hope to receive

¹² Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, *Sahih Muslim*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1981), Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 475, p. 155

good reward, for I heard during the night the sound of your steps before me in Paradise. Bilāl said: I did not do any act in Islam for which I hope to get any benefit but this that when I perform complete ablution during the night or day I observe prayer with that purification what Allāh has ordained for me to pray.¹³

The *ḥadīth* indicates the important position of the non-obligatory Prayer of Ablution as a form of worship pleasing to Allāh The Most Compassionate.

The ritual ablution is also obligatory for the performance of other acts of ritual worship. It must be performed also during the rite of circumambulating the Ka'ba in *ḥadj* and whenever a Muslim wishes to touch or read an untranslated Qur'ān. The Prophet had also recommended that the ritual be performed for non-ritualistic acts such as during sexual intercourse with one's spouse and before sleeping at night. As mentioned in the previous sections on the meaning of worship, any good acts within the prescription of the *Shari'a* which are performed by the Muslim with the intention of pleasing God will benefit the Muslim in the world and in the hereafter.

5.2.2 The Implications of the state of Ritual Purity and the Mosque

There are several important implications of the ritual ablution in relation to the mosque. The first implication is the false understanding that the ablution place is necessary as part of the function of the mosque because it is either closely related to prayers or that it is important to perform the ablution in the mosque because of the sacredness of the building and the act of ablution. It should be emphasised here that the presence of the ablution space and facility is a matter of functional convenience and totally unrelated to any fundamental sacred prescriptions. There is no *ḥadīth* or Qur'ānic Verse which indicates that it is more meritorious or a greater act of faith to perform the ablution in the mosque. There is only the Prophet's *ḥadīth* concerning the approach to the mosque and its relationship with the ritual ablution which is as follows:

¹³ Ibid., Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 6015, p. 1311

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger(peace be upon him) as saying: A man's prayer in congregation is more valuable than twenty degrees and some above them as compared with his prayer in his house and his market, for when he performs ablution doing it well, then goes out to the mosque, and he is impelled (to do so) only by (the love of congregational) prayer, he has no other objective before him but prayer. He does not take a step without being raised a degree for it and having a sin remitted for it, till he enters the mosque, and when he is busy in prayer after having entered the mosque, the angels continue to invoke blessing on him as long as he is in his place of worship.¹⁴

The *ḥadīth* clearly suggests that the ritual ablution is better performed at one's home such that one is in a 'state of prayer' in the journey to the mosque. We suggest that the purpose of the *ḥadīth* was to encourage the Muslim to perform ablution at an earlier time so that there is adequate time between the ablution and the performance of prayer in order for the Muslim to be in a better mental state to perform the prayers. Secondly, we suggest that the Prophet might have mentioned the *ḥadīth* to encourage the Muslim to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation at the mosque. Thirdly, we believe that the purpose of the *ḥadīth* is as a form of self discipline to train the control of the physical and mental self to be in constant remembrance of God and to prevent the Muslims from committing useless, filthy and sinful acts. The ideal Muslim is clean from physical defilement and is in constant remembrance of God in his or her day to day activities. Without the ritual ablution and being in a state of spiritual purity, the Muslim is more careless of his deeds and sayings. There are reports that some religious scholars would always perform the ablution after becoming defiled even though they were not preparing for prayer. They prefer to be in a state of spiritual purity at all times. Their case is not encouraged by the Prophet because he knows that it would put too much hardship on the Muslims.

The second important implication of the meaning of ablution in relation to the mosque is the erroneous notion that one must

¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1394, p. 322

constantly be in a state of spiritual purity while staying in the mosque. There are scholars who would imply that since the mosque is a sacred building, only those who are spiritually pure can enter and stay in it.¹⁵ This has resulted in the mosque of certain countries to possess two different spaces . The first is the special prayer hall where it is restricted to prayers and *Qur'ānic* recitation suggesting that it is a space of spiritual purity. Adjacent to this space and separated by a wall or a balustrade, is the space for the 'impure worshipper and deeds unrelated to prayer'. This space is usually the 'verandah' of the mosque in many tropical countries as Malaysia. Within the scope of the *ḥadīth* and jurist literature consulted in the thesis there is no specific requirement from the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) of the necessity to be in a state of spiritual cleanliness at all times even in the mosque. The only *ḥadīth* which may have been used to strengthen this erroneous belief is as follows:

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying: The servant is constantly in prayer so long as he is in a place of worship waiting for the prayer (to be observed in congregation), and the angels invoke (blessings upon him in these words): O Allāh! Pardon him , O Allāh show mercy to him ,(and they continue to do so) till he returns (from the mosque having completed the prayer) or his ablution breaks. ¹⁶

The *ḥadīth* has referred only to the act of waiting in the mosque for prayer and stipulating that one should be in a state of spiritual purification while waiting for the next prayer. It does not mean that one must always be in this state at all times in the mosque. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi reported Imām Bukhārī's ruling concerning this matter by saying that it is permissible to enter the mosque without ablution.¹⁷

The other important architectural significance is the verdict about the presence of Muslims in the mosque who are in the state of '*janabat*' or spiritual defilement from menstruation or from the act of sexual intercourse. Religious scholars differ with regards to this

¹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, footnote 897, p. 322

¹⁶ Siddiqi, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 1397, page 322

¹⁷ Ibid., Vol. I, footnote no. 897, page 322

problem and their opinions can be divided into three rulings.¹⁸ The first group of scholars ruled that it is not allowed for any person in the state of *janabat* to stay in a mosque at all. The second opinion states that the person in *janabat* is allowed to either pass through or stay briefly in the mosque. The third opinion argues that the person in the state of *janabat* is allowed to be in a mosque. The first and the third opinions represent extreme views supported by the least number of jurists while the second seems to be the general consensus among them. This issue is complex and controversial because there are authentic sayings forbidding the woman who is menstruating to be in a *masdjid*. The term '*masdjid*' in this context is undefined and are left to the later jurists as to whether the Prophet had meant 'the place of prayer', the whole complex of the mosque or whether it merely meant to emphasise that women was not to pray during this condition and therefore the *ḥadīth* does not refer to a particular place or building. The religious jurists in Malaysia allows menstruating women to participate in communal activities at the *surau* but not at the *masdjid* where the difference between the two building types is only the performance of the Friday Prayers in the latter. This is further complicated when one argues that the distinction between the two building types are brought about historically because of administrative convenience of a Muslim government and has nothing to do with the Prophet's Sunna.

The issue of the menstruating woman in the mosque is further complicated when one understands that the house is a Muslim woman's 'mosque' as it is the place where she prays. How is it possible that she may stay away from the house? It is not a wonder that most jurists prefer to support the second opinion without a clear definition of 'a brief stay at the mosque'. In this way the Prophet's *ḥadīth* is respected while not inconveniencing the Muslim of any particular need at the mosque.

The most important implication of the idea of purity then is that the mosque or some certain space of the mosque is forbidden for the menstruating women. Although the spaces are forbidden there is an

¹⁸ This subject is discussed in Syed Sabiq's *Fikih Sunnah*, Vol. 1, pp. 144-147. For an interesting account of the arguments which allows menstruating women to be in mosques, please refer to Maulana Abdullah Ali's book *The Religion Of Islam* (Lahore, Pakistan: The Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1950) pp. 390-394

allowance for their 'temporary' presence such as to pass through or to retrieve or place certain objects in the space. In this respect the mosque or a space of it can be considered as 'sacred' only by virtue of this legal ruling.

5.3 The Implications of Ṣalāt on Mosque Architecture

The mosque is considered as the single most important place for the performance of 'ṣalāt' which is the Muslim ritual prayer. The design and interpretation of mosques have always centred around the Islamic mode of prayers to the point of excluding any other function of the mosque. If there were any provision for other functions considered by the designer and critic, they are taken as minor ones incomparable to the importance of prayer. It is for this reason that mosques have been designed and interpreted as the building to celebrate the praises of God. The mosque is seen as the special house of worship where God dwells and thus prayers and supplications are more acceptable to Him in His house. The mosque is seen as the place where the Muslim can seclude himself in silent meditation with his Lord and seek inner peace through the act of prayer. The whole space of the mosque and its liturgical furniture are riddled by the designer's symbols that relate to prayers and its meaning as a door to the Heavenly world of God. The mosque liturgical furnitures such as the *minbar*, *mihrāb*, *kursī* and elements such as the *maḥṣūra*, decorations, domes and light have been specially singled out by the designer and interpreter as architectural elements to communicate the metaphysical meanings of ṣalāt. The mosque is designed such that it is here that the Muslim can conductively perform the act of ṣalāt by spiritually and mentally disconnecting himself from the real world. The siting and approach to the mosque is made and interpreted in such a way as to symbolise the importance of ṣalāt, the isolation of the inner world and the mental preparation for the act of ṣalāt. The whole ground of the mosque is considered as most holy to the point of excluding any function not directly related to ṣalāt. The mosque, in other words, is considered as similar in its architectural essence as with any cathedral or temple where it is the holy ground of God on the Earth and the meeting place between man and his Creator.

This is the idea of the mosque adopted not only by Western scholars but also by a great number of Muslim scholars. In the thesis we shall present a case where the ideas of the mosque in relation to *ṣalāt* is shown to have been misinterpreted by all those who hold the above view of the present idea of the mosque. Western scholars have not provided a complete account of the meanings and purpose of prayers and their relationship to the mosque in Islam. Muslim thinkers, on the other hand, have restricted their interpretations of prayers to its inner meanings and metaphysical significance while ignoring the outer and communal purpose of prayers. Religious scholars who have little knowledge of the impact of buildings on society have compartmentalised the mosque as a sacred and sanctified place that must be purified from any worldly activities unrelated to *ṣalāt*.

It is maintained in this thesis that the true understanding of the idea of the mosque lies in the complete understanding of the meaning of *ṣalāt* in Islam both at the individual level and its significance at the communal level. It is most important to understand the method of its performance, the types of *ṣalāt* its position and relationship to other acts of worship in Islam and its inner and outer meanings and purposes in order to fully comprehend the implication of this ritual to the idea of the mosque.

5.3.1. The Meaning of Ṣalāt and its Relationship to other forms of 'Ibādāt

The Muslim rite of prayer is known as '*ṣalāt*'. The Arabic meaning of the word may refer to many acts of prayer which includes ancient forms of worship. It may refer to communication with a deity or supplication to God. In the ancient tongue of Aramaic the word may have been derived from the word '*solata*' which means bending of the body or the act of bowing.¹⁹ *Ṣalāt*, as defined simply by Sayid Sabiq, is a ritual worship comprising of both recitations and physical actions which begins with the '*takbir*' and ends with the '*salam*'.²⁰ *Takbir* is the

¹⁹ The First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-1936 edited by M.Th. Houtsma, A.J. Wonsinck, H. A. R. Gibb, W. Heffeenig, E. Levi Provencal, published by E.J. Brill, 1987, p.96

²⁰ Syed Sabiq, Fikih Sunnah, translated by Muhammad Syaf and H.Kamaluddin A. Marzuki (Kuala Lumpur: Victory Agencie, 1990), Vol. 1, p. 191

pronouncement of the formula 'Allāh is Great' and *salām* is the Muslim form of greeting or salutation with the phrase 'peace be upon you'.

In most Western books about Islam and Islamic architecture, *ṣalāt* is emphasised as the most important act for a Muslim to perform. These writings mentions little else about the responsibilities of the Muslim and if they do, *ṣalāt* is placed in the central position as the greatest and best duty of the Muslim. It is true that *ṣalāt* is important in Islam. However it is not true that it is the most important responsibility of a Muslim. Islam is a package where no single part must be singled out or compartmentalised. None of the ritual worships such as prayer, *ḥaḍj* or fasting can be singled out by itself to be the most important. This section presents the argument that *ṣalāt* is but one of the important responsibilities of the Muslim.

The relationship between *ṣalāt* and other deeds in Islam can be understood from many Verses in the *Qur'ān* such as those below:

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East or the West, but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain or suffering and adversity and throughout all periods of panic; such are the people of truth, the God-fearing."²¹

"God has purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs in return is the Garden (of Paradise): They fight in His Cause and slay and are slain: A promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Law, the Gospel and the Qur'an: and who is more faithful to His covenant than God? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme. Those that turn (to God) in repentance; that serve Him and praise Him; that wander in devotion to the Cause of God; that bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer; that enjoin good and forbid evil, and observe the limits set by God- (these do rejoice) so proclaim the glad tidings to the Believers."²²

²¹ Ali, Surā 2, Verse 177, pp.69-70

²² Ibid., Surā 9, Verse 111-112, pp.474-475

It is clear from the above Verses that prayer is mentioned among the many important deeds of a Muslim. Most of these responsibilities and deeds are towards the society in general such as 'enjoining good and forbidding evil', charity, *djihād* or striving in the Cause of Allāh keeping trusts, the importance of family relations and treatment of guests. In many other Verses, prayer is not mentioned even as the first important deed but it is indisputably an important responsibility.

There are many *ḥadīths* which imply that there are other duties more important than *ṣalāt*. *Djihād* is one of them and it means to strive in the way of Islam with one's life and property. The actions of *djihād* ranges from self discipline in performing good deeds to others to the sacrifice of one's life in martyrdom for the Cause of Islam. In many *ḥadīths* *djihād* is placed above prayers or incomparable to it such as in the following description:

Narrated Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī: Somebody asked, "O Allāh's Apostle! Who is the best among the people?" Allāh's Apostle replied, "A believer who strives his utmost in Allāh's Cause with his life and property." They asked, "Who is next?" He replied, "A believer who stays in one of the mountain paths worshipping Allāh and leaving the people secure from his mischief."²³

Narrated Abū Huraira: A man came to Allāh's Apostle and said, "Instruct me as to such a deed as equals Jihād (in reward)." He replied, "I do not find such a deed." Then he added, "Can you while the Muslim Fighters is in the battlefield, enter your mosque to perform prayers without cease and fast and never break your fast?" The man said, "But who can do that?" Abū Huraira added, The Mujahid (Muslim fighter) is rewarded even for the footsteps of his horse while it wanders about (for grazing) tied in a long rope."²⁴

²³ Khan, Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 45, p. 37

²⁴ Ibid., Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 44, p. 36

There are also Verses and *ḥadīths* which implies *ṣalāt* being as equal in importance as charity. In the *Qur'ān*, *ṣalāt* is mentioned most of the times together with charity as in the following Verses:

"And be steadfast in prayer, practice regular charity and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship)." ²⁵

'And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity and whatever good ye send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with God; for God sees well all that ye do.'" ²⁶

The Muslim is always reminded to seek help, forgiveness and peace through these two acts. The first point to be considered is the word prayer in these Verses. The word does not specifically refer to a single or specific type of *ṣalāt*, that is, whether it is an obligatory or a supererogatory one. It is important to repeat that the essence of the differences between these two types of *ṣalāt* is that the supererogatory prayers are personal in nature and benefit the individual Muslim but the obligatory prayers are congregational and benefit the Muslim as a community.

The second point to be considered is the meaning of the word charity in Islam. The words in Arabic that carries this meaning is 'zakāt' and 'ṣadaqa'. *Zakāt* and *ṣadaqa* are part of the concept of Islamic worship. *Zakāt* is the required minimum contribution by Muslims in terms of money and property or goods that can help the Muslims who mostly need assistance.

Ṣadaqa can be in any form whether money, deeds, property or salutations as shown in the *ḥadīth* below:

Narrated Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "On every Muslim there is enjoined (a compulsory) *Ṣadaqa* (Alms)." They (the people) said, "If one has nothing?" He said, "He should work with his hands so that he may benefit himself and give in charity." If he cannot work or does not work?" He said, "Then he should help the oppressed unhappy person (by word or action or both)." They said, "If he does not do it?" He said, "Then

²⁵ Ali., Surā 2, Verse 43, p.27

²⁶ Ibid., Surā 2, Verse 110, p.48

he should enjoin what is good(or said what is reasonable).” They said ,” If he does not do that?” Then he should refrain from doing evil, for that will be considered for him as a Sadaqa.”²⁷

Narrated Abū Huraira: The Prophet (peace be upon him)said, "A good, pleasant, friendly word is a Ṣadaqa.”²⁸

Ṣadaqa is considered an optional act by Islamic jurists. However one must understand clearly the concept of optional deeds in Islam such as those of *ṣalāt* and charity. The concept of optional or supererogatory deeds is the measure of the Muslim’s faith in his aspiration to reach the state of being a *mu’min*.²⁹ The Muslim who resorts to performing the minimum rituals only will not succeed in ascending the stair of faith and his constant and unchanging acts or deeds will usually decline. The true Muslim strives to emulate the Prophet in all of his actions and deeds and to do this in stages according to his ability.

It can undoubtedly be accepted that prayer is an effective mechanism for the purification of the soul but by itself it is inadequate. In individual *ṣalāt* the Muslim struggle against the distractions of his family and personal life to form a communion with God. Charity functions to purify his soul from the love of the material world and the world of the ego. *Djihād* teaches Muslims about the sacrifice of his time, property and money on the community not only to help the others but to also aid him in the soul purification process. The Muslim must also help others less fortunate. If *ṣalāt* is the only mechanism needed than the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunna* would have been filled with the encouragement of prayers and the methods to achieve the ultimate communion with God. However, the *Qur’ān* is filled with many other deeds for the Muslim to perform such as charity, the enjoining of good and forbidding the evil, the defense of Islam and the strengthening of the ties of kinship and brotherhood. Islam discourages the life of asceticism as indicated in the following extracts:

²⁷ Khan., Vol. 8, *ḥadīth* no. 51, p.31

²⁸ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 32

²⁹ The *mu’min* is the ideal Muslim. A Muslim is only one who professes to follow the way of Islam. The title *mu’min* is never used on any Muslim because it represents an ideal concept and furthermore it is only God who knows the purity of the *mu’min*’s soul.

Islam does not teach asceticism and, therefore, does not blunt the aesthetic sense of man. It is with Beauty and Grace that the Lord has created this universe, and man, by his very nature, has a love for these two qualities. Islam makes no attempt to deprive man of his natural urges but channellizes his aesthetic sense to fruitful channels. It exhorts its followers to not to lead a life of renunciation but to use the bounties of the Lord according to His Command. There is no idea of the depravity of human nature in Islam because man is not born with a stigma and his natural instincts are not the mainspring of vices. They are primarily good in themselves provided they are satisfied in accordance with the commands of God.³⁰

On the subject of monasticism Ali's comments are as follows:

But God's Kingdom also requires courage, resistance to evil, the firmness, law, and discipline which will enforce justice among men. It requires men to mingle with men so that they can uphold the standard of Truth, against odds if necessary. These were lost sight of in Monasticism which was not prescribed by God. God certainly requires that men shall renounce the idle pleasures of this world, and turn to the Path that leads to God's Good Pleasure. But that does not mean gloomy lives, nor perpetual and formal prayers in isolation. God's service is done through pure lives in turmoil of this world. This spirit was lost, or at least not fostered by monastic institutions. On the contrary a great part of the 'struggle and striving' for noble lives was suppressed.³¹

The struggle for the purification of the soul must involve all the physical and mental acts performed individually and collectively in the community. For instance *ṣalāt* requires peace of mind from distractions. Distractions of the mind are not only produced by the immediate surrounding of the prayer space but it is also the collection of feelings and images imprinted by the senses when the Muslim interacts in society. If the state of the society is unacceptable to Islam then the Muslim must effect changes in the society through the best means possible whether by political debates, social admonitions and reminders or armed conflict. This is the essence of *djihād* and the duty of enjoining

³⁰ Siddiqi, Vol. 1, pg. 53

³¹ Ali, p.1507

good and forbidding evil. The Muslim as an individual is charged with this responsibility and he or she must not think that this role must be held only by religious scholars, the police or the military. The struggle to produce a state of Islamic society is not only a duty of the Muslim towards God and a social responsibility that benefits society but it is also essential for the purification of the soul. Thus, it can be said that the whole life of a Muslim is the essence of struggle or *djihād*. When the Muslim performs this struggle his success is already assured whether he dies in the attempt or reap the benefit in this world in success without decreasing his reward in the hereafter. Prayer or *ṣalāt*, therefore, cannot be seen isolated from this struggle.

It is, therefore, incorrect to consider *ṣalāt* as the most important and singular form of worship. It is also incorrect to assume that the mechanism of purifying the soul is through *ṣalāt* alone. Thus, the purpose of the mosque cannot be seen isolated from all the responsibilities of the Muslim. To understand Islam as consisting of *ṣalāt* alone and the mosque as a place specially meant for prayer is an injustice to the way of Islam.

5.3.2 The Rites of Ṣalāt and its Implications on Mosques

Ṣalāt consists of a repeated series of body movement and utterances. There are four basic body positions in its performance which are standing, bowing (with the hands resting on the knees), prostrating (with the forehead, the two hands, the two knees and the two feet touching the floor) and sitting (with the two feet folded under the thighs).³² The positions are repeated in the sequence mentioned (Figure 14). While in each of these positions, the Muslim utters silently some Arabic phrases which include Qur'ānic Verses and some recitation taught by the Prophet. In the congregational *ṣalat*, the Muslims line up in straight rows behind the *imām* or prayer leader. The *imām* leads the prayer while the congregation follows after him in all the actions. Most of the performance of *ṣalāt* is conducted in silence except a few types of *ṣalāt* which requires the *imām* to recite aloud some passages in the

³² Please refer to Appendix 4 for further information regarding the types and rites of *ṣalāt*.

Qur'ān in the standing position. The performance of the *ṣalāt*, especially the ones in congregation, usually lasts between 5-10 minutes.

When the Muslim finds it difficult to perform the different body positions due to illness or handicap, he or she may perform *ṣalāt* in a sitting position such as in transport vehicles or on an animal while in a



Figure 14 - The Rites of *Ṣalāt*. The sequence is from the right.

journey. When *ṣalāt* is performed in the sitting position, the Muslim is required to differentiate the bowing of the upper part of the body to symbolise the acts of bowing and prostration. Even in a state of complete body paralysis, the different positions of the body is symbolically performed by the movement of the eyes. As long as the Muslim is able to think rationally, *ṣalāt* must be performed to the best of his or her ability.

The first architectural implication of *ṣalāt* is the place of its performance. *Ṣalāt* can be performed anywhere in a building or in the open fields providing that the place is not filthy such as the garbage dump, or used for answering the call of nature and that it is not a graveyard. The *ḥadīths* concerning the place where *ṣalāt* may be performed are as follows:

Narrated Jābir bin 'Abdullāh: Allāh's Apostle said, "The earth has been made for me (and my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayamum. Therefore my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due."³³

Narrated Ibn 'Umar: The Prophet had said, "Offer some of your prayers at home, and do not take your houses as graves."³⁴

Ṣalat at the graveyards are expressly forbidden for fear that the graves and the dead would be glorified as in the cult of ancestor worship common among the Arabs in pre-Islamic Arabia.

Secondly, the performance of *ṣalāt* does not require the presence of any special liturgical equipment. The *mimbar* or pulpit is not a necessity in the recitation of the *khutbā* or sermon by the *imām* even though the ritual of the *khutbā* requires the *imām* to sit down in the short break in the middle of the *khutbā*. It would just as suffice for him to sit on the floor.

The third implication concerns the acoustic requirement. The acoustics in the mosque requires no special treatment such as the ones in other places of worship where hymns are sung or chants are

³³ Bukhari, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no.429, p.256

³⁴ Ibid., p. 254

pronounced which requires special reverberation time and quality of sound to affect the meditative state of the worshipper. The mosque requires merely that the worshipper in the farthest row from the *imām* be able to hear the takbirs, the short Qur'ānic recitation and the sermon.

Fourthly, there exists no special visual requirement for the mosque in relation to *ṣalāt*. The requirement for long span structures so that the congregation can see the *imām* during *ṣalāt* is fallacious because in the congregational prayers, the worshippers in the farthest row must imitate the ones in front and so forth where there is only the requirement that some of the congregants of the first row can see the *imām*. An important visual implication of *ṣalāt* is in the treatment of floors and walls. As was indicated in the previous section on the method of *ṣalāt*, the Muslim's eyes are cast and directed at the place of prostration on the floor. The cone of vision of the worshippers close to the four walls of the mosque include not only the floor but also the first five foot height of the wall. It is important that the walls and floors not be treated with any kind of decoration or ornamentation whatsoever because they may distract the person in *ṣalāt*. The Prophet had forbidden the presence of any objects or signs at the place of *ṣalāt* as in the following *ḥadīths*:

'Ā'isha reported: The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) stood for prayer in a garment which had designs over it. He looked at these designs and after completing the prayer said : Take this garment to Abū Jahm b. Ḥudhaifa and bring me a blanket for it has distracted me just now.³⁵

The mosque has no requirement or any need that might 'enhance prayer' in any part of the mosque interior. Unlike the rituals of other religions which might require the worshipper to cast their eyes on images or icons during the singing of hymns, supplications, repentance or chantings of meditative formulas, the Muslim eyes are cast downwards in an act of humility in prayer. The Prophet had warned the Muslims about looking hither and thither in *ṣalāt* as in the following *ḥadīth*:

³⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1132, p. 277

Narrated Anas bin Mālik: The Prophet said, "What is wrong with those people who look towards the sky during the prayer?" His talk grew stern while delivering this speech and he said, "They should stop looking at the sky during prayer, otherwise their eyesight would be taken away."³⁶

Narrated 'Āisha: I asked Allāh's Apostle (peace be upon him) about looking hither and thither in prayer. He said, "It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the prayer of a person."³⁷

Thus, it can be seen that *ṣalāt* in Islam is the simplest act of worship requiring no special conditions of architecture. It can be performed at any place except those that were forbidden by the Prophet. The congregational prayer too requires no elaborate design and furniture and can be performed in any architectural space used for working, dwelling or some recreational facilities. If there were no mosque in the vicinity *ṣalāt* can be performed at the cleanest place available. In any activity such as working, learning or recreation in the office, school or stadium, when the prayer time comes all the activity ceases for the moment and the Muslim would align themselves for prayer either in a building or in the open field. In this respect one can say that the mosque is truly 'redundant' in Islam if it was meant solely for the performance of *ṣalāt*.

5.3.3 The Implications of the Congregational and Individual *Ṣalāt* on Mosque Architecture

Ṣalāt can be divided into two types; the *fard* or obligatory ones and the *sunna* or the supererogatory prayers. *Ṣalāt* can also be categorised into those to be performed individually and the ones to be performed in congregation. It is this aspect of prayer in Islam that has been most misunderstood or neglected by architectural historians and academics of mosque architecture. The main function of the mosque has always been stated to be the place of prayer but the investigators have never attempted to analyse the implications of the congregational and individual prayers on the idea of the mosque. As a result the perception

³⁶ Khan, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 717, p. 401

³⁷ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 718, p.401

is that the mosque's main function is seen to be meant for the performance of all types of prayers and that it is a place that must be designed to cater for the meditative aspect of this ritual. In this section we shall present the arguments that refute this conception of the mosque and clarify the architectural implication of this aspect of *ṣalāt* for the mosque. However, before proceeding to a discussion of the implications of the congregational and individual aspects of *ṣalāt*, it is important to understand the types, importance and conditions of performance, and purposes of the two types of *ṣalāt*.

There are seven kinds of *ṣalāts* that are considered as obligatory to be performed by all Muslims. The five *ṣalāts* that must be performed by all Muslims are the five daily prayers which are the *Ṣalāt al-Subh* or the Dawn Prayer, the *Ṣalāt al-Zuhr* or the Mid-Afternoon Prayer, the *Ṣalāt al-'Asr* or the Late Afternoon Prayer, the *Ṣalāt al-Maghrib* or the Sunset Prayer and the *Ṣalāt al-'Ishā'* or the Night Prayer. The weekly Friday Prayers or the *Ṣalāt al-Juma'* is the prayer which replaces the *Ṣalāt al-Zuhr* on that day and is obligatory only for Muslim men. The condition is similar for the *Ṣalāt al-Janaiz* or the Funeral Prayers but women can perform the two prayers if they wanted.

There are many kinds of *sunna* or supererogatory prayers. The *sunna* prayers differ from each other in two respects. Firstly, they differ in that there are the ones to be performed congregationally and the ones best performed individually. Secondly, there are the ones which the Prophet frequently performs and are, therefore, most revered by Muslims and those that he had not regularly practiced and these are not considered as most important by the Muslim jurists. We shall concentrate only on the ones considered important in this thesis. The most important *sunna ṣalāt* are as follows: the Rawatib Prayers (a short *ṣalāt* performed before or after the first six obligatory prayers mentioned above), the two 'Id Prayers (prayers during the two annual Muslim celebrations after the fasting month of *Ramadhān* and during the occasion of the Pilgrimage to Mecca), the *Tahajjud* Prayers (a long prayer after the obligatory *Ṣalāt al-'Ishā'* performed after one has awakened from sleep before the commencement of the *Ṣalāt al-Subh*), the Rain Prayers (prayer to supplicate for rain), the Eclipse Prayers (performed on the occasion of the Lunar and Solar Eclipses to glorify God in honour of His Signs), the *Tarāwikh* Prayers (performed every

night during the month of Ramadhān) and the Tahiyah al-Masḍīd (performed whenever one enters a masḍīd).³⁸ The *sunna* prayers mentioned here represent only half of that which actually exist. Even though the other half are not mentioned, Muslims continue to perform them because of the fact that the Prophet had done so although their positions or considered worth is not as significant as the ones mentioned here.

It is now important to consider one of two most important aspects of *ṣalāt* that affects the idea of the mosque. The first aspect concerns the congregational and individual performance of *ṣalāt*. The second aspect relates to the relative importance of the congregational and individual *ṣalāt*. Let us concentrate on the first aspect of *ṣalāt*. In any Muslim community all the obligatory *ṣalāt* must be established in congregation. Architectural historians have misunderstood this important point as they have always suggested that only the *Ṣalāt al-Juma'* is to be performed in congregation. Their views can be summed up in James Dickie's statement where he has pointed out that prayer in Islam exist on four levels; the five daily prayers represent the individual level, the Friday Prayers represents the community level, the Ramadhān 'Id Prayers represent the city level and the finally the prayers during the Pilgrimage represents the world or international level.³⁹ The important point here is that the five daily prayers are suggested to be performed individually. More importance is placed by the historians on the *Ṣalāt al-Juma'* as a ritual similar to the Christian Sunday worship or the Jewish Saturday worship on the day of the Sabbath. It must be stressed here that Islam possesses no concept of the Sabbath as a day solely meant for rest, contemplation and worship. In Islam, Muslims are encouraged to work seven days a week and to stop work only when the five congregational calls to prayers are heard. After these prayers, including the Friday Prayers, they are encouraged to continue their work. The Muslim may take any day of the week as a day for them to rest from work but it is not obligatory. Apart from the five daily *fard* prayers, there are some *sunna* prayers that must be established in congregation. They are the Rain, 'Id,

³⁸ Please refer to Appendix 5 for a detailed explanation of the types of prayers in Islam

³⁹ James Dickie, 'Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs', an article in the book *Architecture of the Islamic World* edited by George Michell, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978) pp. 35-36

Eclipse and Tarāwikh Prayers. The importance of all the prayers in congregation are indicated in the following *ḥadīths*:

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger(peace be upon him) as saying: Prayer said in a congregation is equivalent to twenty five (prayers) as compared with prayer performed by a single person.⁴⁰

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger(peace be upon him) as saying: The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the Night prayer and the Morning prayer. If they were to know the blessings they have in store, they would have come to them, even though crawling, and I thought that I should order the prayer to be commenced and command a person to lead people in prayer, and I should then go along with some persons having a fagot of fuel with them to the people who have not attended the prayer in congregation and would burn their houses with fire!⁴¹

The *ḥadīths* on the importance of establishing prayers in congregation is valid only for men. Women may join in the congregational prayers but the best place of prayers for them is in their houses. An exception to this rule for women are the 'Id Prayers where there are recommended to attend and celebrate these occasions in congregation. Although Muslim men are required to perform the congregational prayers they are allowed to perform the obligatory prayers individually only under circumstances which do not permit them to do so congregationally. The establishment of prayers in congregation is considered so important that if no one in a Muslim community establishes it, the sin of not performing the prayers fall onto the whole community even if they have established it at their homes individually.

As with the congregational *ṣalāt*, the individual prayers also have an important place in a Muslim life. There are more *sunna* prayers that should be performed individually than there are those that should be performed congregationally. The importance of performing the *sunna* prayers mentioned are deduced from the fact that the Prophet frequently performs them by himself, on his sayings or commands that

⁴⁰ Siddiqi, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 1363, p. 315

⁴¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1370, p. 316

the Muslim should not follow certain prayers with him in congregation and his command for the Muslim to perform them at home which implies a private form of prayer.⁴²

Let us now deal with the second important aspect of *ṣalāt* which is the relationship and the relative importance of the individual prayers to that of the congregational ones. Since there are no specific *Qur'ānic* Verses and *ḥadīths* on this issue, we are left to speculate on this matter with the sources available. There are two related questions that must be addressed here. What is the purpose of *ṣalāt*? How does the individual and the congregational prayers help to achieve this purpose? We shall attempt to deal with the first question. *Ṣalāt* is the highest form of glorifying Allāh The Most High. The Muslim can glorify Him by reciting praises or even being conscious of him in every action in his or her life. *Ṣalāt* is instituted such that the Muslim can express this glorification in a more formal manner. If the Muslim forgets to glorify God in every minute of his or her day to day life, he or she is reminded to do so at least five times a day in the performance of *ṣalāt*. Other than as a reminder, *ṣalāt* can also be considered as an effective mechanism to purify the soul from the over indulgence of the luxury of time in the fulfilment of ones desires. *Ṣalāt* disciplines the self by forcing it to detach itself from the worldly life into a posture of submission and a reminder that one will leave the world in death. *Ṣalāt* forces the self to give up precious time every day so that when the time comes for the sacrifice in *djihād* or *hiḍjra* or in death, the Muslim would then be ready to do so willingly. Finally, *ṣalāt* affords the Muslim an opportunity to inculcate the love of God and the life hereafter by a kind of meditative practice.

The next question is how do the congregational and individual prayers help to achieve the purpose and objectives of *salāt*? Before answering the question we must ascertain several facts about the two types of *ṣalāts* clearly. The first fact is that the obligatory prayers are far more important than the supererogatory prayers. This can be ascertained from the fact that a Muslim can choose not to perform the *sunna* prayers but he or she can never neglect to perform the obligatory ones. Since the individual prayers are mostly *sunna* prayers it,

⁴² Please refer to the *ḥadīth* on pages 193 and 194

therefore, follows that they are less important as compared to the congregational ones. However, it must clearly be understood that the *sunna* prayer is still considered important and its practice is highly recommended as stated in the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīth* as follows:

"O thou folded in garments! Stand to prayer by night, but not all night. Half of it or a little less. Or a little more and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones. Soon shall We send down to thee a weighty Message. Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing the soul and most suitable for framing The Word (of Prayer and Praise)."⁴³

"Establish regular prayers at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer, and reading: for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony. And pray in the small watches of the morning (late night). It would be an additional prayer (of spiritual profit) for thee: soon thy Lord will raise thee to a Station of Praise and Glory."⁴⁴

It is related on the authority of Abu Umma that the Apostle of God said: "You should offer Tahajjud for it has been the way of the pious souls before you and it is a special means of seeking the countenance of the Lord and it removes the evil effects of sins and protects from the transgression of God-given laws."⁴⁵

It is related by Abu Ayub Ansari that the Apostle of God said: "The gates of Paradise open up for the 4 *rak'as* before Zuhr during which *salaam* is not carried out."⁴⁶

The *Qur'ānic* Verses and the first *ḥadīth* quoted above point to the importance of the Tahajjud Prayer where as the *ḥadīth* emphasises the importance of the Rawatib Prayers. It is also stated in another *ḥadīth* that the rewards of the *sunna* prayers can help to cover the deficiency in the obligatory prayers in the hereafter. The essence, therefore, of the *Qur'ānic* Verses and the *ḥadīths* concerning prayer is that the

⁴³ Ali, Surā 73, Verses 1-6, p.1633

⁴⁴ Ibid., Surā 17, Verse 79, p.717

⁴⁵ Ibid., Surā 17, Verse 79, p.717

⁴⁶ Mohammad Asif Kidwai, *Meaning And Message Of The Traditions* (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1978), Vol. 2, p.196

obligatory prayers are merely the minimum number of prayers to be performed and that a true *mu'min* would strive to increase his or her faith through the individual prayers. Thus, it can be seen that both the congregational and the individual prayers have their own specific importance in the life of a Muslim.

We shall now attempt to answer the question concerning the roles played by both the congregational and the individual prayer to bring about the objectives of *ṣalāt*. As stated before, there are two essential objectives of *ṣalāt*. The first encourages the act of sacrifice and the second encourages the practice of meditation in an effort to be in communion with God. We suggest that congregational prayers help to fulfil the first objective and the individual prayers help fulfil the second one. Prayers in congregation require greater sacrifice of time and effort by the Muslim than in the performance of the individual prayers. The reason is because it requires more time to prepare to leave the house or office to attend to the prayers at the mosque whereas the individual prayers are easily and best performed in the privacy of one's home. Secondly, the congregational prayer forces the Muslim to interact with the community, to be concerned about the welfare of others and to help those in need. All these responsibilities extract a significant toll on a Muslim's wealth, time and effort. It is difficult for a Muslim to achieve the second objective of *ṣalāt* concerning meditation since meditating usually requires time and seclusion. The Prophet has clearly stated the conditions of congregational prayers particularly concerning the length of time in its performance in the following *ḥadīths*:

Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī reported: A person came to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) and said, "I keep away from the morning prayer on account of such and such a man because he keeps us so long. I never saw Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) more angry when giving an exhortation than he was that day. He said: O people, some of you are scaring people away, so whoever of you leads the people in prayer he must be brief, for behind him are the weak, the aged and people who have urgent business to attend."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Siddiqi, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 940, p. 249

Anas bin Mālīk reported the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) having said: When I begin the prayer I intend to make it long, but I hear a boy crying, I then shorten it because of his mother's feelings.⁴⁸

'Uthmān b Abu'l-'Āṣ al-Thaqafī reported: The Apostle of Allāh(peace be upon him) said : Act as an Imam for your people . He who acts as Imām of the people he must be brief for among them are the aged, among them are the sick, among them are the weak and among them who are people who have business to attend. But when any of you prays alone , he may pray as long as he likes.⁴⁹

It can be seen from the *ḥadīths* quoted above that congregational prayers must be performed in the briefest possible manner so as not to put the community to difficulty. On the other hand, a person performing the individual prayers such as the Tahdjdjud Prayers can spend as much time in its performance as he or she feels able to. The great length of time which the Prophet spent on the Tahdjdjud Prayers can be observed from the following *ḥadīths*:

Narrated Al-Mughīra: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to stand (in the prayer or pray till both feet swelled. He was asked why (he offered such an unbearable prayer though his past and future sins are forgiven by Allāh) and he said, "Should I not be a thankful slave?"⁵⁰

It can be seen that it is this type of prayer which the Muslim can use to practice the objective of meditation in an effort to be in communion with God. It can, therefore, be said that *ṣalāt* in Islam exemplifies the importance and need of a Muslim to be active at the social level and inculcate the spiritual need to be close to Allāh The Most High. This view is shared by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui in his translation of the Sahih Muslim:

⁴⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 952, p.250

⁴⁹ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 946, p.250

⁵⁰ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 230, pp. 128-129

The aim of religion, as was said before, is to develop a spirit of piety and God consciousness in man. Islam heightens this aim by saying that this God-consciousness must be externalized in a social order permeated by religious sanctity and goodness. It is for this reason that prayer in Islam is divided into two parts, one individual devotion to Allāh in which a single person as a single entity is trained to develop love for God.; it is a Nafl prayer. The second part is collective prayer which trains a person how religious piety is to be transfused into society. The five obligatory prayers are all congregational prayers in which every Muslim, who has no valid reason to remain aloof, has been enjoined to participate. It is in fact social training in God-consciousness which Islam exhorts its followers to develop and which distinguishes this faith from other religions. Moreover, meeting together five times a day in the mosque and showing submission to the Lord bind the Muslims together in tender chords of spiritual affinity.⁵¹

Both of these aspects of *ṣalāt* are essential for the success of the Muslim towards increasing his or her *imān* or faith to the highest level which is called *iḥsān*.⁵² *Iḥsān* is the level where the Muslim is conscious of the presence of Allāh The Most High in every aspect of the Muslim's life.

We shall now consider the various implications of the congregational and individual prayers in relation to the architecture of the mosque. There are basically three main implications to be discussed.

The first implication concerns the idea of sanctity in relation to prayer and the mosque. It has always been implied by architectural historians and religious scholars alike that the mosque's sanctity is derived primarily because of its main function as a prayer space. We suggest that there is no basis to this idea in Islam. Although there is the idea of sanctity of the mosque with regards to prayers and the three Sacred Mosques in Islam, it is not so with the community mosques wherever they may be. As explained in a previous chapter, the Prophet had specifically stated that *ṣalāt* in these mosques are worth thousands of

⁵¹ Siddiqi, Vol. 1, p. 314. 'Nafl' is another word for the supererogatory prayers.

⁵² Narrated Abū Huraira: One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked,.... "What is *iḥsān*?" Allah's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that he is looking at you."

times more than anywhere else.⁵³ This means for instance, that if a Muslim were to perform the obligatory prayers alone in either one of these mosques the rewards as stipulated is due on him. If he were to perform *ṣalāt* in congregation in these mosques, then his or her rewards would be multiplied 25 or 27 times. However the Prophet had never mentioned or even implied that *ṣalāt* at a community mosque merit any special rewards. The *ḥadīth* on the importance of congregational *ṣalāt* clearly states that the rewards are due for the performance in congregation. The Prophet had never mentioned that the congregational prayers must be in a mosque. Another *ḥadīth* adds strength to this statement where the Prophet had encouraged Muslims to offer *ṣalāt* again with an individual Muslim who comes to the mosque and misses the congregational prayer. It clearly shows that *ṣalāt* has the same merit in congregation wherever it is performed. We are not suggesting that the community mosque possess no idea of sanctity. Sanctity in the community mosque is related to several other aspects of Islam.

The next implication of *ṣalāt* on architecture concerns the issue of the greater sanctity of the *ḍjami'* mosque over the *masḍjid* because it is only in the former that the Friday Prayers are allowed to be performed. This attitude has led to the planning system in which there are numerous neighbourhood mosques where the daily prayers are held but the Friday Prayers are performed in the bigger city mosques. This arrangement began in the past history of Islam probably as a way to control the masses by the caliphs who would influence the people through his appointees as *imāms* of the great mosques in his provinces where the fear of political and military reaction sparked by the tribal mosques is of paramount importance. The modern Islamic jurist, Syed Sabiq, has recorded the view of *imām* Syaukani on this matter which clarifies the fact that there is no such difference in sanctity between the two types of mosques. Syed Sabiq has recorded the view of Syaukani in which the famous jurist maintained that all the requirements of the previous jurists which specify a particular place of prayer such as the necessity of its performance in a mosque, or a *ḍjami'* mosque and the stipulation about the minimum number of congregants have not been

⁵³ Please refer to the footnotes in Chapter 1, pp. 5 and 6.

derived from either the Sunna or from the Holy *Qur'ān*.⁵⁴ Syaukani points out that these requirements are the personal opinions of the jurists and should not be taken as the final verdict of the *Sharī'a* pertaining to this matter. He believed that the Muslim should free themselves from this opinion and refer to the Sunna for guidance where the minimum definition of congregation by the Prophet was two Muslims. He adds that there is also no requirement of a specific place for the performance of the congregational prayer as well as the Friday Prayers. If these prayers can be performed at a mosque with a large number of congregation then it is well and good that they be done so but if these conditions do not exist than the community must still perform them in the best manner and place possible.

The third and final implication concerns the perception that the mosque must be designed in such a manner as to offer the best place for meditation in prayer. This opinion is a result of the assumption that the mosque is the place for the performance of all types of prayers and that the only objective of prayer is as a ritual for communion with God. We have pointed out that it is the individual *ṣalāt* which fulfils the objective of meditation and that the best manner of its performance is in private. The Prophet had emphasised that the individual prayers such as the Rawatib and the Tahdjdjud Prayers be performed in the house as in the following *ḥadīths*:

Zaid b. Thābit reported: The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) made an apartment with the help of the leaves of the date trees or of mats. He went out to pray in it. People followed him and came to pray with him. Then they came again one night and waited for him but the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) delayed in coming out to them. And when he did not come out, they cried aloud and threw pebbles at the door. He came out in anger and said to them: By what you have been constantly doing I was inclined to think that it (Night prayer) might not become obligatory for you. So you must observe the optional prayers in your houses, for the prayer observed by a man in the house is better except an obligatory prayer.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Sabiq, Vol. 2, pp. 255-259

⁵⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1708, p. 377

Ka'b b. 'Ujrah said: The Prophet (may peace be upon him) came to the mosque of Banū 'Abd al-Ashhal. He prayed the Maghrib prayer there. When they finished the prayer, he saw them praying the supererogatory (Sunat Rawatib) prayer after it. He said: This is the prayer to be offered in the houses.⁵⁶

Zaid b. Tsabit narrated that the Prophet said: Prayers are better performed at your own houses than at my mosque except the Fard prayers.⁵⁷

Furthermore, the Prophet had clearly stated to the Muslim that the house is a kind of a mosque for his family and that it must be kept alive with the performance of the *sunna ṣalāt* as in the following *ḥadīths*:

Jābir reported Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying: When anyone of you observes prayer in the mosque he should reserve a part of his prayer for his house, for Allāh would make the prayer as a means of betterment in his house.⁵⁸

Ibn 'Umar reported Allāh's Apostle (May peace be upon him) as saying: Observe some of your prayers in your houses and do not make them graves.⁵⁹

Although it was mentioned that the congregational prayers can be performed anywhere, the best place is obviously the mosque since it is the meeting place for all the Muslims. The brief *ṣalāt* in congregation affords the opportunity for the Muslim to interact socially and encourages their effort in planning for the development of their community. Thus, it can be seen that the idea of the mosque approaches not as a sombre place of meditation but more for the gathering of the Muslim community for various activities of which congregational prayer is but one of them.

⁵⁶ Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (New Delhi: Al-Madina Publications(P) Ltd., 1985) Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 1295, p. 342

⁵⁷ Sabiq, Vol. 2, p.9

⁵⁸ Siddiqui, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 1705, p. 376

⁵⁹ Siddiqui, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 1703, p. 376

5.4 The Idea of the Mosque in relation to the Meaning of I'tikāf

One of the most common understanding about the mosque is that it is the place which offers seclusion from the world. Other than as a place of *ṣalāt*, this notion about the mosque is popular both among the Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It seems that one of the design criterion of the mosque is that it should provide a place for private seclusion and meditation. The result of this criterion includes the construction of mosques at secluded sites and mostly detached from the urban fabric on island sites. The architectural ensemble of the mosque usually includes high and thick walls to emphasise the secluded character of the innermost parts of the mosques. In some mosques, particular care is taken to design pockets of garden spaces or private areas where one can be alone with one's thought. The whole architectural atmosphere of the mosque is of a silent, foreboding place of meditative seclusion. This understanding about the mosque is reinforced by the existence of such building types as the monastic mosques in some parts of the Muslim world. The ritual most closely related to the idea of seclusion and monasticism is known as *i'tikāf*.

The aim of this section is to clarify the meaning of *i'tikāf* in Islam from the Sunnī Muslim perspective and its implications for the initial conception and eternal idea of the mosque. Writings on mosque architecture seldom include a detailed discussion about the nature of the activities associated with the mosque. Whenever there is a mention of some or many of the activities it is either interpreted within a cultural framework totally alien to Islam or that it generalises an approach to Islam incompatible to the Sunnī Muslim orthodoxy. In order to clarify this problem, it is important to understand the meaning and place of *i'tikāf* in Islam particularly with respect to the Prophet's practice and the Islamic way of life.

5.4.1 The Ritual of *I'tikāf*

Abdul Hamid Siddiqui defines *i'tikāf* as follows:

"Iktikaf is derived from 'akifa 'alaihi, meaning "he kept" or " he cleave to it constantly or perseveringly", and iktikaf means

literally "to stay at one place". Technically, it is staying in a mosque for a certain number of days, especially the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan."⁶⁰

Thus, essentially, the word *i'tikāf* literally refers to the act of staying in the mosque for a prescribed period of time. The definition, however, gives little indication as to the actual manner of performing the ritual nor does it allude to its meaning in Islam.

The *Qur'ān* mentions *i'tikāf* in several Verses and two of which are as follows:

"And Lo! We made the Temple a goal to which people might repair again and again, and a sanctuary : take, then, the place whereon Abraham once stood as your place for prayer. And thus did We command Abraham and Ishmael: Purify My Temple for those who will walk around it, and those who will abide near it in meditation, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves (in prayer)."⁶¹

"It is lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the (day's) fast: they are as a garment for you and you are as a garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right, and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship from you. Now, then, you may lie with them skin to skin, and avail yourselves of that which God has ordained for you, and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night, and then resume fasting until nightfall; but do not lie with them skin to skin when you are about to abide in meditation in houses of worship. These are the bounds set by God: do not, then, offend against them - (for) it is thus that God makes clear His messages unto mankind, so that they might remain conscious of Him."⁶²

In both of the Verses quoted above, Muhammad Asad, Ali and Maududi use the word 'meditation' as the translation of the meaning of *i'tikāf*. The first Verse refers to the history of the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'ba

⁶⁰ Siddiqui, Vol. 2, p.575

⁶¹ Asad, Surā 2, Verse 125, p. 26

⁶² Ibid., Surā 2, Verse 187, p. 39-40

where Allāh The Most High was addressing the prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismāīl (peace be upon them) about the sanctity of the Sacred Mosque of Islam. The second Verse refers to the command of fasting in the month of Ramadhān where the Muslims are allowed to mix with their spouses at night with the exception of those performing *i'tikāf* in the mosques. The translated word may not indicate clearly the actual meaning of the practice of *i'tikāf* and must be carefully understood within the framework of Islam and its definition of worship.

A clearer idea of the practice of *i'tikāf* can be observed in the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) *ḥadīths* as quoted below:

Narrated Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī: Allāh's Apostle (peace be upon him) used to practice *i'tikāf* in the mosque in the middle third of the month of Ramaḍān and after passing the twenty nights he used to go back to his house on the 21st night, and the people who were in *i'tikāf* with him also used to go back to their houses. Once, in Ramaḍān, in which he practiced *i'tikāf*, he established the night prayers at the night in which he used to go home, and then he addressed the people and ordered them whatever Allāh wished him to order and said, "I used to practice *i'tikāf* for these ten days (i.e. middle 1/3) but now I intend to stay in *i'tikāf* for the last ten days of the month, so whoever was in *i'tikāf* should stay at his place of seclusion. I have verily been shown the date of the Night of Power but I have forgotten it. So search for it in the in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramaḍān."⁶³

Narrated Alā bin Al-Ḥussain: Safiya, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), told me that she went to Allāh's Apostle to visit him in the mosque while he was in *i'tikāf* in the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān. She had a talk with him for a while, then she got up in order to return home. The Prophet accompanied her to the gate of the mosque.⁶⁴

The practice of *i'tikāf* is primarily associated with this particular deed of the Prophet. In the month of Ramadhān, the Prophet would pitch a tent in the mosque and lived in the mosque for the last ten days of the month. The Prophet had never mentioned any other intention apart from

⁶³ Khan, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 235, p. 131

⁶⁴ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 251, p. 139

implying this practice as a form of devotion to Allāh in seeking the *Lailat al-Kadr* or The Night of Power. *Lailat al-Kadr* is the holiest night in Islam which the Ḳur'ān was revealed. This holy night and its unbounded merits are mentioned in the Ḳur'ān and are corroborated by the Prophet's *ḥadīths*. Muslims are encouraged to seek this night and since it is hidden from the knowledge of the Prophet, he had recommended that they seek them in the last ten nights of *Ramadhān*. However, the command to seek this night is not directly related to the practice of *i'tikāf* in the mosque as indicated in the first *ḥadīth* mentioned above. The second *ḥadīth* describes the Prophet being visited by one of his wives during *i'tikāf*. It is this *ḥadīth* that is used by most Muslim jurists to construct a guideline for the Muslim in *i'tikāf*. The essence of *i'tikāf*, primarily, is the requirement to stay in the mosque but the Muslim is allowed to attend to the important family matters which his wife is unable to perform. Thus, although the Muslim is in 'seclusion' in the mosque, he is still attached in many ways to his worldly responsibilities.

Muslim jurists such as Syed Sabiq and Imām *Shāfi'ī* are unanimous in advocating that *i'tikāf* is a form of personal meditation through the performance of supererogatory acts such as the *sunna* prayers, the *dhikr* and the Ḳur'ānic recitation.⁶⁵ However, they differ in opinion as regards to the place of *i'tikāf* which is to be performed in a *masjid* or a *djāmi'* mosque. The jurists also differ on the aspects of the Muslim's responsibilities and commitments towards the society and family. One opinion states that the person in *i'tikāf* is absolved from the social responsibilities such as visiting the sick and following the funeral procession. Another opinion advocates the continuing responsibilities of the Muslim to the extent of engaging in a marriage or business contract even while in *i'tikāf*.

There are basically three types of *i'tikāf* practised by Muslims. The first type is the practice of *i'tikāf* during the last ten days of *Ramadhān*. It is for this reason that some Muslim jurists require that the Muslim to fast during *i'tikāf* at any other time. However, this

⁶⁵ The work of Jurists I refer to are from Syed Sabiq's *Fikh Sunnah* [translated by M. Syaf (Kuala Lumpur: Victory Agencie, 1990)] Vol. 4, p. 1-20; Imam Shafie's *Al-Umm* [translated by I. Yakub (Kuala Lumpur: Victory Agencie, First Malaysian Edition, 1989)] Vol. 3, p. 84-88;

opinion finds little support because there were cases where the Companions had performed *i'tikāf* without fasting on months other than Ramadhān. The second type of *i'tikāf* is considered obligatory. This type of *i'tikāf* is practiced when the Muslim makes a *nazar* or a pledge and if his wishes were granted by God, then the Muslim must carry out the pledge or promise of *i'tikāf*. The third type of *i'tikāf* is that which is performed by the Muslim at any time he wishes. It should be mentioned here that even though it is not prohibited for women to perform *i'tikāf* at the mosques, it is not recommended or encouraged by the Muslim jurists for various practical and social reasons.

From the above description of *i'tikāf* it can easily be observed that *i'tikāf* is a kind of meditation and its performance implies a type of seclusion in Islam. The Muslim in *i'tikāf* is seen to perform a concentrated form of devotion in the mosque. It is indeed fitting that mosque interpreters have understood the mosque as a place of seclusion from the world and a place of meditative devotion in Islam since the practice of *i'tikāf* comprehended in this manner supports these ideas. However, it is most important to point out that the view of *i'tikāf* thus far described is totally isolated from the total meaning of worship in Islam. The practice of *i'tikāf* must be viewed and understood in the light of its place in the meaning of worship, its implications as a form of *sunna* practice, Islam's view of monasticism and the Muslim's social responsibilities. It is only in this way that a clearer interpretation of what *i'tikāf* is can be made and its relationship to the meaning and purpose of the mosque be ascertained.

5.4.2 The Place of *I'tikāf* in Islam

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important to understand the place of the ritual of *i'tikāf* in the broader context of Islam. The first aspect to be considered is the relative importance of the practice of *i'tikāf* in Islam.

Syed Sabiq mentions that he could not find any *ḥadīth* or jurist's opinion that emphasises the practice of *i'tikāf*.⁶⁶ He, thus, concludes that *i'tikāf* is not one of the most important rituals to be practiced by the Muslim. Unlike the supererogatory prayers where there

⁶⁶Sabiq, Vol. 4, p. 1

are specific sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) which emphasises clearly their merits and importance, the Prophet makes no mention of this practice or even encourage it among his Companions. As related in the previous section, the advice of the Prophet to the Muslims to seek the Night of Power in Ramadhān cannot be directly related to the practice of *i'tikāf* even though the saying was in the context of his performance the ritual. The fact that the Prophet makes no direct correlation between this devotional practice and the seeking of *Lailat al-Kadr* and in the absence of any other *ḥadīth* about the merits of *i'tikāf* explains the Muslim jurists' silence concerning this matter. It can thus be said that the practice of *i'tikāf* is not among the most highly recommended acts for the Muslim to perform.

The second aspect related to the place of *i'tikāf* in Islam concerns its position as an individual *sunna* act of devotion. A *sunna* act in Islam can be simply defined as any act performed by the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and includes the performance of supererogatory prayers and the way he performed any mundane activities in life such as eating, talking or even sleeping. The imitation of the Prophet's way of life finds a special place in the Muslim's social interaction and personality. The *sunna* acts which concerns specific rituals such as prayers, recitation of Qur'ān and *i'tikāf* are divided into the acts that should be performed congregationally or individually. There are *sunna* prayers that should be performed congregationally such as the 'Id prayers and there are those to be performed individually such as the Tahadjjud prayer. It is recorded in several *ḥadīths* that the Prophet had emphasised that the performance of individual *sunna* prayers should be done in the home.⁶⁷ It is obvious that individual acts of devotions of a personal nature is better performed in privacy to ensure the purity of intention. How then can this aspect of prayer relate to the performance of *i'tikāf* since it must be performed in the mosque? It

⁶⁷ The *ḥadīth* I refer to is as follows:

"Ka'b b. 'Ujrah said: The Prophet (may peace be upon him) came to the mosque of Banū 'Abd al-Ashhal. He prayed the Maghrib prayer there. When they finished the prayer, he saw them praying the supererogatory (Sunat Rawatib) prayer after it. He said: This is the prayer to be offered in the houses."

Hasan, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1295, p. 342

simply means that the person performing *i'tikāf* should perform all the individual *sunna* acts of prayer, *dhikr* and Ḳur'ānic recitation when no one is looking or when he is alone in the mosque. The idea that the person in *i'tikāf* should be constantly in *ṣalāt* or in reciting the Ḳur'ān finds no precedent in the Sunna of the Prophet. The Prophet, in many occasions have constantly reminded the Muslim to perform all deeds in moderation so as not to impose hardship on the Muslim's health, spouse and family.⁶⁸ *I'tikāf* must be performed in moderation with respect to the deeds and duration of the practice. The Muslim in *i'tikāf* should perform the *sunna* rituals of prayer, recitation of the Ḳur'ān and *dhikr* when he finds privacy in the mosque. This requirement does not imply that the Muslim should purposely seclude himself from the Muslim community visiting the mosque for this would in turn imply a necessary form of monasticism in Islam.

The performance of *i'tikāf* must also be viewed in relation to Islam's position on monasticism. It was stated previously that the Prophet had advised his Companions against any extreme acts of devotions as in the following *ḥadīth*:

Narrated Anas bin Mālīk: A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet asking how the Prophet worshipped (Allāh), and when they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "Where are we from the Prophet as his past and future sins have been forgiven." Then one of them said, "I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from women and will not marry forever," Allāh's Apostle came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allāh, I am more submissive to Allāh and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast. I do sleep and I also marry

⁶⁸ The *ḥadīth* which I refer to is as follows:

"Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: The news of my daily fasting and praying every-night throughout the night reached the Prophet. So he sent for me or I met him, and he said, "I have been informed that you fast everyday and pray every-night (all the night). Fast (for some days) and give up fasting (for some days); pray and sleep, for your eyes have a right on you, and your body and your family (i.e. wife) have a right on you."

Khan, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 198, p.112

women. So he who does not follow my traditions in religion is not from me (not one of my followers)."⁶⁹

This advice includes acts of monasticism and is supported by the following Verse in the *Qur'ān*:

"And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them were on right guidance, but many of them became rebellious transgressors."

"Then, in their wake, We followed them up with (others of) Our apostles: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary, and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and Mercy. But the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of God; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among them who believed, their due reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors."⁷⁰

We have already recorded the views of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Abdul Hamid Siddiqui concerning the idea that Islam encourages full participation in social life and discourages the life of the ascetic. It can, therefore, be surmised that *i'tikāf* cannot be a form of monasticism where the Muslim secludes himself from the society in performing individual acts of devotions. This erroneous form of *i'tikāf* is entirely outside the Islamic spirit because it means abandoning the Muslim's responsibilities towards the Muslim society.

Finally it is most important to appraise the practice of *i'tikāf* in relation to the social responsibilities of the Muslim. The Muslim has many responsibilities in the community. The mere performance of the ritual worship alone does not guarantee the success of the Muslim in the eyes of Allāh The Most High. The *Qur'ān* is full of exhortations for Muslims to increase their faith by sacrificing their time, property and wealth for the sake of others. From the above description of the responsibilities of the Muslim in the Muslim community, the idea

⁶⁹ Khan, Vol. 7, *ḥadīth* no. 1, p. 1

⁷⁰ Ali, Surā 57, Verses 26-27, p. 1506-1507

of total separation from the community is alien to Islam. The person in *i'tikāf* should not prolong his stay in the mosque to the extent of jeopardising his responsibilities and duties towards family and community. Even when the Muslim is in *i'tikāf* and is confined to the mosque he is still not freed from these duties.

It can, therefore, be observed that the idea of *i'tikāf* as a form of monastic seclusion is not within the spirit of Islam. The Muslim is not encouraged to perform extreme deeds of devotions such as secluding in the mosque for long periods of stay. However, since the Prophet himself had performed this deed, it is part of the Sunna and Muslims are encouraged to imitate his actions. It is important to understand fully the moderate guidelines established by the Prophet and be constantly reminded of the true position of *i'tikāf* in Islam.

It is important also at this point to include a brief discussion on the Prophet's seclusion at the Cave of Hira before the *Ḳur'ān* was revealed. James Dickie, in his article 'Allāh and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs', have associated this form of seclusion as similar to that of *i'tikāf* practised by the Prophet after the Revelation.⁷¹ He had further indicated that the existence of the monastic mosques is due to the Muslims following this Sunna of the Prophet. It is essential to point out that the Prophet's seclusion in the cave is not similar in any way to the practice of *i'tikāf*. The Prophet had secluded himself before the revelation of the *Ḳur'ān* because the conditions of the Arab society had disturbed his gentle spirit. He was seeking solace in all this confusion. However, after the *Ḳur'ān* was revealed, the Prophet had never wandered off in the wilderness to seclude himself from his people as he had done before. The Companions of the Prophet in most of their *ḥadīth* narration has never referred to this act of seclusion in the Prophet's past in order to justify any desire for the monastic way of life. The exhortations of the *Ḳur'ānic* Verses and the *ḥadīths* above are more than enough to emphasise the importance of communal and family involvement in Islam as opposed to the life of a monk in a monastery. The path to faith is not through the 'ease' of rejecting the world but through the difficult path of subjecting worldly concerns to the dictates

⁷¹ James Dickie, 'Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs' in *Architecture Of The Islamic World* edited by George Michell (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978) p. 40

of a pure heart. The essential teaching of Islam lies in the life of moderation where the world serves as the cultivating field for the eternal life in the hereafter.

5.4.3 Meaning of *I'tikāf*

Thus far it has been established that *i'tikāf* is not a form of monastic seclusion. *I'tikāf* is the practice of staying in the mosque and performing extra deeds of devotions in the absence of public scrutiny. Although it was shown that *i'tikāf* is not one of the most important rituals in Islam, it is essential to understand its meaning in relation to the Muslim's path to strengthen his faith so that its implications on the function of the mosque can be fully ascertained.

Dr. Sidi Gazalba, in expounding his theory on the meaning of the mosque, explains his concept of *i'tikāf* clearly in his book Masjid: Pusat Ibadat dan Kebudayaan Islam.⁷² He maintains that Islam is a way of life that takes the path of the 'middle way' and has no extremes such as the monasticism of Buddhism or Christianity nor the total secularism of the present culture. Islam possesses both aspects of community and individual development even in matters of faith. On the one hand, *i'tikāf* is an individual act of 'regenerating' or 'recharging' one's faith amidst the surrounding cares of the world by retreating to the mosque to concentrate on the meditation and contemplation of God and the way of Islam. However, Dr. Sidi Gazalba mentions that this retreat from life is not a total retreat because the individual still has obligations to the family and community to perform. In this respect *i'tikāf* functions both as an individual act that benefits not only the individual but the society at large.

To this concept of *i'tikāf* we would offer a similar but slightly different interpretation. We believe that the concept of *i'tikāf* has an even lesser individualistic meaning than even that proposed by Sidi Gazalba. Since acts of individual worship such as the *sunna* prayer or charity are more merited when performed far from the eyes of the public, *i'tikāf* as a solely private worship in the mosque contradicts this concept of the mosque. As with Dr. Sidi Gazalba, we support his

⁷² Siddik Gazalba, Masjid: Pusat Ibadat Dan Kebudayaan Islam, (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1975) p. 148-151

interpretation of *i'tikāf* as a form of recharging the spirit of Islam in the individual whenever the Muslim feels his faith slipping or not increasing. However, the method of recharging is not through the act of seclusion and concentrated ritual devotions, but in the act of transferring the physical self from its familiar home surroundings and lifestyle to an unfamiliar pattern of life and environment. In addition, *i'tikāf* is also the transfer of the individually inclined self to the congregationally inclined self by the presence and more concentrated participation and sacrifice in the community.

In the first instance, one of the effective ways of increasing one's conviction on a particular matter is the 'change of scenery' concept quite similar to the 'holiday' and 'business meeting' concepts. These two analogies are common occurrences in most modern societies. A change of scenery and a different form of lifestyle than that which one is used to have the psychological effect of concentrating one's mind on a particular matter and exposing oneself to a whole range of new experiences that may open and relax the mind and heart into the fuller meaning of life. This is the effect of holidays and outstation seminars on a person or a group of people. In this respect, the person in *i'tikāf* uproots his daily and mundane rituals of home and work and from his house and work places and situates himself in the unfamiliar and unpredictable life in the mosque. This physical segregation induces the mind and heart to a partial separation of the daily affairs he is used to and the mind and soul has more time to practice and reflect on the meaning of life. It may involve silent and long meditation but this acts should take place only when no one is looking such as during the time of the Tahadjjud Prayers when the mosque is empty of its congregation. If there were other Muslim performing *i'tikāf* individual meditations should be done without the knowledge of one another's actions.

In the second instance, *i'tikāf* benefits the Muslim's soul by the sacrifice of individual concern and bending one's energy to the direct development of the community. The person in *i'tikāf* performs the janitorial tasks of keeping the mosque clean and may even help in cooking meals for the Muslim working in the mosque or see to the needs of the poor and homeless frequenting or living in the mosque. The Muslim in *i'tikāf* is presented with a greater chance of participating in the community projects than if he was at home. These community

concerns are important not only for the development of the Islamic social and built environment but it merits the disciplining of the soul for love of others through the spirit of sacrifice.

It can, therefore, be suggested that *i'tikāf* is an individual act of devotion that develops faith through the idea of sacrificing an individual's time and attention to the development of the Muslim community as well as the disciplining of the individual's self in the performance of *sunna* rituals. When the Muslim leaves the mosque to resume his daily duties, his spirit is regenerated into a better life of moderation, humble gratitude to God through the performance of the *sunna* rituals and the ease of sacrificing his wealth, time, property and attention to the development of the Muslim community.

5.4.4 Implications of *I'tikāf* on the Idea of the Mosque

The argument above suggests that the whole notion of the mosque being a place of meditative seclusion should be reconsidered. The mosque is the centre for the Muslim community and it is the place where activities pertaining to the strengthening of the Islamic brotherhood and intellectual development occur. *I'tikāf* is not seclusion from the community but the voluntary act of living in the mosque for a prescribed period of time to learn the value of the greater 'self' of the Muslim society. Seen within this perspective, the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque approaches more toward an active centre for communal gatherings rather than a place of secluded meditation.

5.5 The Idea of the Mosque in relation to the Ritual of Qur'ānic Recitation and *Dhikr* in Islam

One of the most important rituals implied by scholars in Islam or in architecture which relate directly to the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque is Qur'ānic recitation. Western scholars in their description of mosques have emphasised the presence of the *kursī* as part of the essential liturgical furniture of the mosque.⁷³ These

⁷³ Rawson, P. 'Islamic Architecture', in the book *World Architecture* edited by Trewin Copplestone, (London :The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1971), p.149

descriptions seem to imply that the rituals of Islam in the mosque follows closely that of the Jewish traditions or some other Eastern religion where the reading and recitation of the scripture by priests in the houses of worship is a most important part of worship. There are also Muslim scholars who makes ill defined and general statements that the mosque is the best place for prayer and reciting the *Ḳur'ān*.⁷⁴ These scholars have never defined clearly the true rituals of recitation of the *Ḳur'ān* in Islam and its relationship to the mosque. In most cases the Muslim scholars feel that the mosque is the most appropriate and sacred place where this ritual should be performed. The direct implication of their statements have lead the Muslims to misinterpret that the recitation of the *Ḳur'ān*, in whatever condition, is most blessed by God when performed in the mosque. This is the reason why many Muslims go to the mosque only to perform prayer and recite the *Ḳur'ān* individually before prayers thinking that they have performed a ritual of high merit. The worshippers believe that individual *sunna* acts such as prayers and *Ḳur'ān*ic recitation is more important than fulfilling the obligatory duties of strengthening the ties of brotherhood by establishing conversations with strangers in the mosque, finding out about the needs of other individuals in the society or even participating in the community projects that may benefit the community and Islam as a whole.

It is important to establish the real nature of the rituals and importance connected with the recitation of the *Ḳur'ān* and its relationship to the purpose of the mosque. At the moment the mosque is considered as the best place to recite the *Ḳur'ān* by virtue of the mosque's 'sacredness' and as a place of congregation. If it is true that this is one of the main functions of the mosque, then the mosque is nothing more than a sacred object highly revered only for its status as a house of worship. If the recitation of the *Ḳur'ān* in the mosque is accepted regardless of any condition, then the mosque cannot function as the centre of Islamic communal activity for these activities will be in direct conflict to the solemn nature of the ritual of recitation. It is,

Dickie, J., 'Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs' in Architecture Of The Islamic World edited by George Michell, 1978, page 37

⁷⁴ M. Daud, Pengantar Masyarakat Islam (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990), p.230

therefore, most important to understand specifically the nature of Ḳur'ānic recitation in all of its conditions in order to understand its place in relation to the mosque.

There are three main responsibilities of all Muslims in relation to the Ḳur'ān. The Muslim must learn to recite, comprehend and teach the Ḳur'ān. The importance of these duties are clearly stated in the following *ḥadīth*:

Narrated 'Uṭḥman: The Prophet said, " The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it." ⁷⁵

The most important occasion for reciting the Ḳur'ān is in the act of *ṣalāt*. The Muslim man and woman must learn to recite the Ḳur'ān firstly because the prayers are not valid without its proper recitation. It was explained in a previous section that each individual Muslim must recite the Ḳur'ān during *ṣalāt* audible only to himself. The *imām* or prayer leader must recite the Ḳur'ān audible to the whole congregation in the Maghrīb, 'Ishā' and Subh prayers. The most important issue with regards to the recitation of the Ḳur'ān is the question of its recitation in the mosque. Aside from reciting the Ḳur'ān in *ṣalāt*, the Muslim is encouraged to recite the Ḳur'ān to himself and to teach its proper recitation to others. These are the two contexts which must be clearly understood if a proper judgment about the purpose of the mosque is to be made with regards to this issue.

There are several important reasons why a Muslim is encouraged to recite the Ḳur'ān individually. Firstly, the Ḳur'ān contains Verses which are God's own words repeated verbatim by the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him). To recite God's words are considered as expressing one's love to God and He rewards the Muslim for every single letter recited.⁷⁶ Secondly, there are greater rewards for the Muslim who strives to memorise the Ḳur'ān. The Ḳur'ān is also recited for protection against evil of all kinds and the house with a

⁷⁵ Khan, Vol. 6, *ḥadīth* no. 545, p. 501

⁷⁶ H. Zuhri, *Sunan At-Tirmidzi*, (Kuala Lumpur: Victory Agencie, 1993), Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 3075, p.508

Narrated Abdullah bin Mas'ud: I heard the Prophet said, " Whoever recites a single letter of the Quran, for him is a single reward multiplied ten times. I do not say that the verse 'Alif Lam Mim' as a single letter but Alif as one letter, Lam as another letter and Mim as a third letter."

constant echo of recitation is blessed by God and protected from ill fortune.⁷⁷ The Muslim also recites the *Qur'ān* to gain comfort from the soothing rhythm of the Verses which has an effect of creating peace and tranquillity in a distressed mind and heart.⁷⁸ Finally the recitation of the *Qur'ān* is a form of *dhikr* or remembrance of God.

Imām Ghazali had derived a set of rituals and conditions for reciting the *Qur'ān* individually. There are no specific traditions relating to this subject.⁷⁹ The Muslim must firstly be in ritual purity by performing the ritual ablution as described in a previous section on prayer. Wherever possible he or she should sit down calmly facing the *kibla* direction before commencing the reading of the *Qur'ān*. The reciter must be in a frame of mind similar to that of *ṣalāt* to benefit fully from the reading. The best times stated by the *Qur'ān* and supported by the Prophet in reading the *Qur'ān* is in the early hours of the morning preferably after performing the Tahajjud Prayer and the Dawn Prayer:

"O thou enwrapped one! Keep awake (in prayer) at night, all but a small part of one half thereof- or make it a little less than that or add to it (at will) ; and (during that time) recite the Qur'an calmly and distinctly, with thy mind attuned to its meaning."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Yakub, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Vol. 2, p.106

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Truly the house in which the Quran is recited is blessed with peace on the occupants, with goodness and the angels flock to the house while the Unseen evil forces flee from the house.

⁷⁸ 'Islam is a natural religion in the sense that in its comprehensive system there is a reasonable arrangement for the satisfaction of every human urge. Just as man needs to live, similarly he has passion for sweet melodious voice, and if one is deprived of it, the harmonious development of his personality is inhibited. Sweet voice exercises a healthy effect on the minds of the human beings and even that of animals. Islam recognizes this basic fact of human life and it does not crush this yearning of human soul. But since its approach towards life is healthy and balanced, it, therefore, does not allow human beings to divert their minds to unhealthy activities for satisfying their yearnings. It has, therefore, forbidden the use of musical instruments and the singing of immoral songs or such songs as make a man lethargic and rouse in him base desires. But it has at the same time encouraged the reciting of the Quran in a melodious voice in order to elevate the soul of man. Islam does not encourage any art, literature or music which undermines the moral fibre and the will-force of man. All that brings drowsiness and weariness in life, or which vibrates the animal lust in man, or which makes us close our eyes to the reality around us, is a message of decay and death which a dynamic religion like Islam cannot tolerate. It has submitted the instincts of man to moral and spiritual channels. The yearning for sweet voice has found expression in Islam in the form of the good Qira'at, which is a special feature of Islamic civilisation.'

Siddiqi, Vol. I, footnote no. 1072, page 380-381

⁷⁹ Yakub, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Vol. 2, page 111

⁸⁰ Asad, Surā 73, Verses 1-4, p.903

The individual recitation of the Ḳur'ān is best done alone and in the house. The recitation of the Ḳur'ān is similar to the acts of the *sunna* prayer where its merit is much more when performed alone than in the presence of others. This fact is recorded in Imam Ghazali's Ihya Ulumuddin:

One night Sa'id Al-Musayyab heard Umar Abdul Aziz reciting aloud the Qur'an in the Mosque of the Prophet. Sa'id ordered his son to go to the person who was praying and tell him to lower his voice in recitation. His son replied that the mosque is a public place and that they had not a single right to it and furthermore, the man who was reciting was the Governor of Medinah. Sa'id then called onto the reciter and said, "O you who is praying. If you desire that Allāh The most High to accept your prayer, then lower your voice. If you desire that people accept you, the people are only in need of Allāh." When Umar, the Governor of Medinah heard, this advice, he shortened his supererogatory prayer and lowered his voice in recitation.⁸¹

It is, therefore, a mistake for anyone to consider that the mosque is the best place for reciting the Ḳur'ān without carefully analysing the specific situation of recitation. There are certainly merits for reciting the Ḳur'ān in the mosque but it is mostly related to communal education and reminders.

The recitation of the Ḳur'ān in the mosque is restricted to several different situations. The first important fact to understand is that the Prophet has mentioned about the importance of its recitation in a congregation and not in the mosque. This applies to any Muslim congregation who gathers at any place including the mosque. The Ḳur'ān is recited in a congregational group under three different conditions. It is recited in the spirit of educating others by the correct mode of pronunciation. The audience must have both visual and acoustical contact with the reciter in order to fully imitate the correct recitation. The Ḳur'ān is also recited in a group as a form of *dhikr* or remembrance of Allāh. If the congregation has no particular activity to perform it is important for them to remind each other on the

⁸¹ Op. cit., Vol. 2, page 119

remembrance of Allāh. The Ḳur'ān is recited together or individually in turns so as others may evaluate the correctness of the recitation, learn a better way of recitation and is in constant reminder and remembrance of Allāh The Most Compassionate.

The recitation of the Ḳur'ān is a form of *dhikr* or the remembrance of Allāh. It should be mentioned that scholars of Islam agree to a wider scope of the meaning of *dhikr* other than the recitation of Ḳur'ānic Verses and specific formulas of Allāh's Praises. Syed Sabiq records the definition of *dhikr* which includes gatherings of academic discussions on matters pertaining to Islam.⁸² Finally the Ḳur'ān is also recited in a lecture situation where the subject is not necessarily the Ḳur'ān but matters pertaining to the social or political life of the community where certain Verses of the Ḳur'ān are directly related.

It is certainly inadequate for a Muslim to be able to recite and not comprehend the meaning of the Verses in the Ḳur'ān. The Muslim who is able only to recite without understanding the meaning is at the lowest level of worshipping God because he or she is unable to derive much benefit from the recitation. The act of recitation is but a ritual whereas the effort to understand is the very essence of the spirit of Islam. Each Muslim individual must strive to understand the Ḳur'ān. It is important for the individual who recites the Ḳur'ān in the seclusion of his or her house to comprehend and ponder the meanings of the Verses so that he or she may derive guidance from it. It is because of this importance that scholars have strived in the science of Ḳur'ānic *tafsīr* so that the Muslim masses may have a proper framework to guide them in the understanding of the Ḳur'ān. The Muslim is cautioned in interpreting the Ḳur'ān by the whims of his mind without subjecting his conclusions to the test of the Ḳur'ānic *tafsīr* methodology. This does not mean that the meaning of the Ḳur'ān is forever restricted by the classical works for the meaning grows with the understanding of the world through the various fields of knowledge. The meaning of the Ḳur'ān is forever expanding and new interpretations must be sought to cater for new found knowledge and problems without abandoning the classical interpretations. The act of comprehending the meaning of the Ḳur'ān is both an individual and a congregational affair. The Muslim is

⁸² Sabiq, Vol. 4, page 218

encouraged to contemplate the meanings individually and to discuss his or her interpretations with others in the spirit of education and debate. It is most important to derive a consensus of opinion in any matter of Ḳur'ānic interpretation. It is the solemn duty of each Muslim to comprehend and to teach others about the meanings of the Verses in the Ḳur'ān. The teaching of the meaning of the Ḳur'ān can be done best in a group seating in any architectural situation including in the mosque. There is no special place for learning the Ḳur'ān whether it is individually done or in a group. The mosque is not the physical limit of the activities concerning the recitation, comprehension and teaching of the Ḳur'ān.

In conclusion, it can be observed that the mosque is not the sacred place to recite the Ḳur'ān. There is no direct link between the sacredness of recitation and that of the mosque. The recitation is important only in prayer and individual strife for a higher faith. The mosque is but one of the places where the teaching of the Ḳur'ān can take place. It is not a place meant specifically for the individual to contemplate the meaning or to recite the Ḳur'ān. The mosque is a place for the benefit of the congregation and not for the isolated few. In this respect the idea of the mosque approaches more as the community activity centre where the learning and dissemination of the Ḳur'ānic knowledge can take place.

5.6 The Implications of Funerary Practices on the Idea of the Mosque

The mosque is commonly associated with the meaning of death and the funerary ritual in Islam. The relationship exists in the form of tombs (Figure 15) and cemeteries in mosques. The presence of these two elements in mosques have reinforced the idea of the mosque as a holy and sacred ground that permits functions related to solemn religious rituals only. The building of tombs in mosques or mausoleums is a controversial subject in Islam. The Sunnī scholars are unanimously against their construction in the strongest terms. The Shī'a and the Ṣūfī Muslims revere their dead to the point of worshipping and even treating them as intermediaries between man and God.

This meaning of death is not one that the Sunnī subscribes to. Although this may be the case, there are those in Sunnī societies that allow the presence of the tomb and the cemetery in the mosque. The National Mosque in Malaysia contains the tomb of one of her respected political leaders. There are a few mosques that has a cemetery within its compounds. These are obviously influenced by the great mosques of the past where the Caliph's body and, in the case of Sinan, the architect's body is buried in a tomb in the mosque compound. There are also mosques in the past that holds the tombs of religious scholars. This is an important issue to be clarified since the presence of these two elements affect the concept of the mosque as a whole. If their presence in the mosque is relevant and important in Islam then the mosque cannot help but be restricted to a house of worship that would not be appropriate for use as an active community centre. Dr. Sidi Gazalba has pointed out that

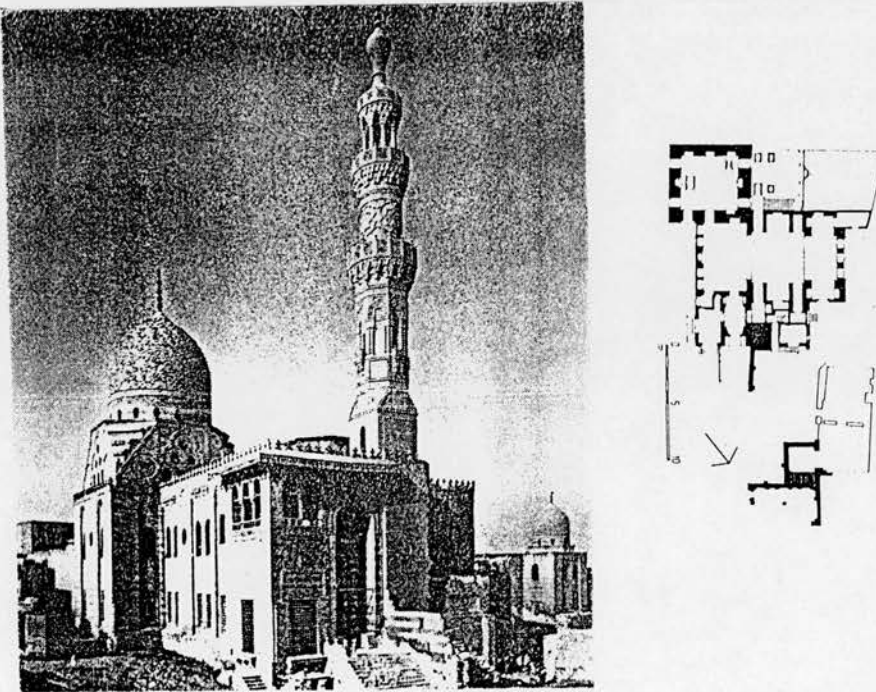


Figure 15 - A tomb mosque. Funerary Complex of Sultan Qāyitbāy (1472) in Cairo. The domed part of the building contains the tomb of the Sultan.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New york: William Morrow and company, Inc., 1978) p.228

the mosques used in this manner would not possess the balance between the 'religious' and 'secular' aspects in Islam. The mosque would possess too much 'religious' spirit and thus be restricted in use for specific religious rites and rituals for the spirit only. It is, therefore, important to understand the meaning of death and the practices associated with it in Islam.

5.6.1 The Meaning of Death in Islam

The Muslim believes in five stages of life. The first stage is the life of the soul before the physical form of life exist in the womb.⁸³ The second stage is the life in the womb. The foetus in Islam is a human being at the age of four months when the soul is 'breathed' into it.⁸⁴ If a

⁸³ This is based on the following Qur'ānic Verse:

'When Thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves(saying) "Am I not your Lord(Who cherishes and sustains you?)." They said, "Yea! We do testify!" (This) lest you say on the Day of Judgement: "Of this we were never mindful". (Ali, Surā 7, Verse 172, pp.393-394)

'Abu Urwah records the narration of Ubayy ibn Kaab (from Maududi's Qur'ānic interpretation of this Verse) as stating that once before the creation of the world, Allāh The Most High had gathered all the human souls who were to be born as living beings on the earth and had asked them who He was. The souls had answered without hesitation that Allāh was the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. The souls had further made a covenant with God that they would not take any other deity for worship but Allāh alone. This covenant was made with the First Man, Adam as the witness.'

Hence based on this interpretation of the Quranic Verse, scholars such as Maududi claims that before any human was born he or she had existed in the Unseen realm of the Souls.

Urwah, pp. 15-16

⁸⁴ This is based on the following *ḥadīth*:

'Narrated 'Abdullāh: Allāh's Apostle, the truthful and truly inspired, said, Each one of you collected in the womb of his mother for forty days, and then turns into a clot for an equal period (of forty days) and then turns into a piece of flesh for a similar period (of forty days) and then Allāh sends an angel and orders the angel to write four things i.e., his provision, his age, and whether he will be of the wretched or the blessed (in the Hereafter). Then the soul is breathed into him. And by Allāh a person among you may do deeds of the people of the Fire till there is only a cubit distance between him and the Fire, but then that writing(which Allāh has ordered the angel to write) preceeds, and he does the deeds of the people of Paradise and enters it; and a man may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is only a cubit distance between him and Paradise, and then that writing preceeds and he does the deeds of the people of the Fire and enters it.'"

Khan., Vol. 8, *ḥadīth* no. 593, p. 387

The *ḥadīth* is recorded by Imam Bukhārī in the chapter of Divine Preordainment. It is meant not to invite a passive attitude on the Muslims with regards to an active life but to prevent them from feeling overly confident and arrogant of the religious or good deeds which they have done. The

miscarriage occurs at this stage, the funeral service for the foetus is similar to that of any adult. The third stage of life is in this present world which spans after birth and ends when death occurs. The fourth stage of life occurs in the world of the dead and is known as the 'Barzakh' world.⁸⁵ This is the period between life on earth and the everlasting hereafter. The fifth and final life is when the world and the universe reach their ends and a new world of the afterlife occurs.

The meaning of death is important for the successful life of the Muslim. The most successful Muslim is the one who is in constant thought of death and the one who is most prepared to face it. It is recorded in a ḥadīth that when one prays, it is important to pray as if one is seeing God in front and feels the presence of the angel of death in the back.⁸⁶ The Prophet has frequently advised the Muslims to prepare

Muslim must not consider himself safe from the Fire even if he has done all the deeds required of him by Islam but he must strive to better himself everyday of his life until his very last breath in this world.

⁸⁵ This is based on the following ḥadīths:

'Narrated Asmā' bint Abī Bakr: Allāh's Apostle once stood up delivering a sermon and mentioned the trial which people will face in the grave. When he mentioned that, the Muslims started shouting loudly.'

'Narrated Ibn 'Abbās: The Prophet once passed by two graves, and those two persons (in the graves) were being tortured. He said, "They are being tortured not for a great thing (to avoid). One of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine, while the other was going about with calumnies to make enemies between friends. He then took a green leaf of a date palm tree, split it into two pieces and fixed one on each grave. The people said, " O Allāh's Apostle! Why have you done so?" He replied, I hope that their punishment may be lessened till they(the leaves) become dry." "'

'Narrated Anas: The Prophet said, " When a human being is laid in his grave and his companions return and he even hears their footsteps, two angels come to him and make him sit and ask him: What did you use to say about this man, Muḥammad? He will say: I testify that he is Allāh's slave and His Apostle. Then it will be said to him, " Look at your place in the Hell Fire. Allāh has given you a place in Paradise instead of it." The dead person will see both his places . But a non believer or a hypocrite will say to the angels, " I do not know, but I used to say what the people used to say!" It will be said to him , " Neither did you know nor did you take the guidance." Then he will be hit with an iron hammer between his two ears and he will cry and that cry will be heard by whatever approaches him except human beings and jinns."

Khan, Vol. 2, ḥadīth no. 455, 443, 422 on pages 257, 249 and 235 respectively

⁸⁶ The ḥadīth is from a Companion recorded by Imam Ghazali in his Ihya Ulumuddin as follows:

'Hatim Al-Ashamm was asked about his concentration in ṣalāt and he replied:

"When I intend to perform ṣalāt, I stand calmly at the place of prayer and imagines the Ka'ba directly in front of my eyes, the Bridge of Sirat-ul- Mustaqim beneath my feet, Paradise on my right, Hell on my left and the angel of death behind me. I would also imagined that I am performing the final prayer of my life and stand in fear and hope with humility and when the Salat is finished I am ignorant whether Allāh has accepted my prayer or not.

for death by practicing charity and performing the ritual worship. The Muslim must plan his life in such a way that he or she must fulfil as much as life's obligation before his or her life comes to an end.⁸⁷ It is once said that the present world is as a farm land for the cultivation of crops for the hereafter.⁸⁸ This means that the Muslim must perform deeds that will be beneficial for him when he dies. This does not mean building tombs or memorials. The Muslim believes that there are only three things that will be of value when death ends the present life. When death occurs the Muslim's account of deeds is closed except for these three things.⁸⁹ The first is his offspring. If he or she was successful in rearing children who became good Muslims, the rewards for all their deeds that are the result of their parents' teachings will reach the Barzakh world and adds to the account of deeds until the resurrection. If they were negligent in teaching their children, the negative actions of their offspring will also affect the conditions of the dead in the Barzakh. The second thing that affects the condition of the dead in the Barzakh world is the product of their wealth. If the dead had left endowments, buildings or objects beneficial for the Muslim in the cause of Islam then they will receive all the rewards and blessings whenever these facilities are used. The third thing that may affect the condition of the dead is the beneficial knowledge which they have left in the world. As long as these knowledge

Yakub, I Ihya Ulumuddin, Vol. I, page 525

⁸⁷ Narrated Mujāhid: 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar said, Allāh's Apostle took hold of my shoulder and said, "Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveller." The sub narrator added: Ibn 'Umar used to say "If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive till the morning do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death."

Khan., Vol. 8, ḥadīth no. 425 p. 284

⁸⁸ Quoted from a lecture given by a Malay Ṣūfī leader of Darul Arkam in Malaysia, Ustaz Ashaari

⁸⁹ Syed Sabiq records the following authentic ḥadīths from Sahih Muslim and Ibn Mādjā:

Narrated Abā Hurairah: The Prophet said, "When a person dies, his actions and rewards ceases except for three things: charity and wakaf, useful knowledge and the supplication of a good offspring.

The Prophet said: Of the good deeds which a Muslim has done during his or her life in the world which has an effect on his conditions in the grave are the useful knowledge which he or she has taught, the pious offspring which was left behind, the Qur'ān which is left for others, the mosque which he or she has built, houses built for the travellers, canals that was dugged and charity from his or her own property.

Sabiq, Vol. 4, pp.185-186

is used beneficially, the dead will receive the rewards for them. Of the three, the last one mentioned is the most important and which lasts the longest. Offsprings, endowments, buildings and objects have a limited time span but knowledge may exist as long as there are human beings in this world. Since the building of tomb offers no utilitarian function, it can, therefore, be clearly observed that its construction for the sake of praying for the dead or being close to a pious body has no effect on the conditions of the dead. The notion that a dead Muslim may receive the *baraka* flowing ceaselessly from the tomb of the saint or a Prophet is contradictory to the teachings of Islam from the perspective of the Sunni Muslim. As for the use of tombs for the purposes of intercession, this idea presents a grave offense in the eyes of Islam.

5.6.2 The Funeral Rites in Islam

Muslims do not worship or revere highly their dead ancestors. When a Muslim dies, the family buries the dead and the grave is kept as long as the remains are present. When there are no longer any remains, the grave can be used for other purposes such as burying other dead bodies or the whole cemetery may be used to build any kind of building including a mosque provided it is free from any remains. The cemetery in Islam is sacred only as far as it being used as a burial place and its sacredness ends when it is no longer used for such a purpose. The cemetery is important to a Muslim as the place for reminding the Muslim of their inevitable end in this world. It is a place kept sacred not for individual families to visit their dead relatives but as a reminder for the whole Muslim community. The Muslim does not possess any special rituals when visiting the dead in the cemeteries except uttering the following supplication:

Sulaimān bin Buraida narrated on the authority of his father that the messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) used to teach them when they went out to the graveyard: "Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of the city(i.e. graveyard), among the believers, and Muslims, and God willing we shall join you. I beg of Allāh peace for us and for you."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Siddiqi, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 2128, p.462

The death of a Muslim is not only a family affair but it is also a community responsibility. The funeral service for the Muslim who has died comprises of the preparation of the body, the performance of the Funeral Prayers and finally the burial rites.

The preparation of the dead body consists firstly of cleansing the body and its ritual bathing such that the body is in a state of ritual purity. This rite is exempted in two cases. The first is for the martyr and the other for the decomposed body. The martyr is buried without bathing the body and without cleaning the blood and wounds resulting from a battle. The blood in this case is sacred for the death reached is the highest and the noblest form of all which is in *djihād*. After the body is bathed, it must be wrapped fully in cloth or garment using a common and inexpensive fabric.

The dead body is then ready to be positioned for the performance of the Funeral Prayer. The dead body is positioned in front of the *imām* with its side facing the *qibla*. The prayer for the dead is different than other *ṣalāt* because it contains no prostration and bowing. The congregation and the *imām* stands and performed four *takbirs* with supplications in between each *takbir*. The Prophet has forbidden this ritual to be performed at the taboo times for prayers when the sun is rising, at high noon and as it set.

When the Funeral Prayer is over, the dead is carried using a coffin lifted by the Muslims. The funeral procession proceeds quietly at a modest pace towards the cemetery. It is recommended that when a Muslim sees a funeral, he or she should stop and make a small supplication for the dead and remind him or herself of the inevitable end. At the cemetery, the Muslims gather for the '*talqin*' ritual. This is a ritual where the *imām* proceed to remind the living and the dead about the rewards and punishments in the *Barzakh* and more importantly to teach them how to answer the questions put to them by the two angels Munkar and Nangkir.⁹¹ The Muslims believe that the two angels will question the dead about God, Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The dead will receive the preliminary punishment and rewards before the resurrection.

⁹¹ For the full *talqin* ritual please refer to Syed Sabiq's *Fikih Sunnah*, Vol. 4, pp.147-148

5.6.3 The Idea of the Mosque in relation to Funerary Rites in Islam

It is important to understand the architectural implication of the concept of death and the funeral service in Islam and their relationship to the mosque. The Prophet had never specified a special place for the preparation of the dead, the performance of the Funeral Prayer and the burial of the dead. What exists in the traditions are his *ḥadīths* with regards to the building of tombs and of mosques built to honour the dead as follows:

Narrated 'Āisha and 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās: When the last moment of the life of the Prophet(peace be upon him) came he started putting his 'Khamīṣa on his face and when he felt hot and short of breath he took it off his face and said, " May Allāh curse the Jews and Christians for they built the places of worship at the graves of their prophets." ⁹²

Narrated 'Urwa: 'Āisha said, " The Prophet(peace be upon him) in his fatal illness said, ' Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians because they took the graves of their prophets as places of praying.' " 'Āisha added, " Had it not been for that the grave of the Prophet(peace be upon him) would have been made prominent but I am afraid it might be taken as a place for praying." ⁹³

Jundub reported : I heard from the Apostle of Allāh(peace be upon him) five days before his death and he said, " I stand acquitted before Allāh that I took any one of you as friend, for Allāh has taken me as his friend, as He took Ibrāhīm as His friend. Had I taken any one of my Ummah as friend, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a friend. Beware of those who preceded you and used to take the graves of their Prophets and righteous men as places of worship, but you must not take graves as mosques, I forbid you to do that." ⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 427, p.255

⁹³ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 414, p. 232

⁹⁴ Siddiqi, Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 1083, p.269

The Sunnī scholars are unanimous in agreeing that tombs must not be constructed in any manner other than only as a slight differentiation to the ground.⁹⁵ The scholars recommend that graves be raised slightly merely to differentiate between the cemetery grounds and that people will not walk or sit over them. As for the building of tombs and cemeteries in mosques they are again unified in forbidding them for fear of condoning the worship of the dead. The Funeral Prayer can be performed anywhere including at the cemetery. There were cases where the Prophet had performed the Funeral Prayer in houses, in the open, at the cemetery and even in the mosque.⁹⁶ This shows that the mosque has no exclusive right over the funeral service. It is the tradition of the Prophet that the dead body be prepared and the Funeral Prayer performed at the house of the deceased or the place of his death. This is within the tradition of the Prophet as follows:

Yahya related to me from Malik that he had heard that the messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, died on Monday and was buried on Tuesday and people prayed over him individually with no one leading them. Some people said that he would be buried in al-Baqi(a cemetery near Madina). Abu Bakr as Siddiq came and said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, say, 'No Prophet was

⁹⁵ For a further discussion on the opinions of Sunnī jurists on the subject of tombs and mausoleums, please refer to Syed Sabiq's *Fikih Sunnah*, Vol. 4, pp. 149 - 157

⁹⁶ It is important to clarify some points in this issue. Although there were cases where the Prophet had performed the funeral prayer at the above mentioned places, the most controversial seem to be at the mosque and at the graveyard. Syed Sabiq records the discussion of the jurists at great length with regards to this controversy. The first point to be clarified was whether the mosque is the best place for the performance of the Funeral prayer. The second question is whether the Prophet had contradicted himself by the performance of one funeral prayer at the graveyard. The jurists are of the opinion that the mosque is not the best place for the performance of this prayer because the Prophet had left a strong tradition that a Muslim should be buried as quickly as possible and wherever possible at the place of his death or in a Muslim cemetery. The Funeral prayer can be performed anywhere the body is without the presence of any ritual objects or sacred space such as the mosque. The second question about praying at the cemetery was unanimously agreed by most jurists by saying that the Prophet had not contradict his strong tradition of forbidding the Muslim to perform any kind of prayer at the cemetery. The jurists reasoned that in that particular occasion, the Muslims had failed to inform him when he had ordered them to do so with regards to the Funeral prayer of a particular person. When he found out that the Muslims had already performed the Funeral Prayer at the home of the deceased, and had finished burying the body, the Prophet quickly went to the cemetery and prayed in front of the grave. The jurists maintained the Prophet was not setting a precedent of glorifying the dead or worshipping at a cemetery but he was merely performing the Funeral Prayer as if the dead body was in front of him. Anyway, the Prophet had already made the intention of performing the Funeral Prayer for that person and it may be felt that he merely wanted to fulfil his intention. The discussion is given in *Fikih Sunnah*, Vol. 4, pp. 121-123

ever buried except in the place where he died. "' So a grave was dug for him there(in Aisya's, the Prophet's wife, house).⁹⁷

The Prophet was bathed and buried in his house. The Funeral Prayer was also performed there. This indicates that the Prophet had never meant his grave to be turned into a tomb either for remembrance or for worship. His teachings are clear on the aspect of worshipping the dead and the position of the mosque in relation to it.

The mosque is the place where the community gathers and news of a death in a family is spread for all the Muslims to know and for them to discharge the obligatory duties of preparing the dead body, performing the Funeral Prayer, following the funeral procession, entertaining the needs of the deceased's family and assisting in the burial process. Islam does not discriminate the living or the dead in the eyes of God. The mosque is the place for the living and the communal centre for the Muslims to cater for all the affairs of life including those related to death. The community is the source of strength for the family of the deceased and it is upon them that the responsibility to help the Muslim in life and to perform the necessary service for his demise. The mosque is neither a graveyard nor a mausoleum for the dead.

5.7 Summary and Conclusion

This section summarises the findings and conclusions of the preceding discussions. The first conclusion concerns the idea of mosque sanctity. It was seen that this idea of sanctity is related to the condition of a person in major defilement, to the performance of the *Taḥiyyah al-Masḍjid* prayer and the practice of *i'tikāf*. It cannot be ascertained clearly whether the sanctity of the mosque applies to the whole building or to a particularly designated space in a building.

The second conclusion relates to the meaning of prayer in Islam. It can be safely concluded that the idea of sanctity of the mosque is not directly related to the performance of prayer with the exception of the *Taḥiyyah al-Masḍid*. Prayers can be performed anywhere whether in a building or at a place designated as a mosque or not. The mosque, then

⁹⁷ Bewley, *ḥadīth* no. 27, p.88

cannot be said to exist solely because of the need to establish prayer although prayer is one of its important functions.

The idea of the mosque or any part of it as a place for personal worship or meditation finds no place in Islam. This third conclusion is directly related to the implications of the meaning and purpose of the *sunna* prayer, *i'tikāf* and Qur'ānic recitation. Individual deeds of devotions to increase one's faith are best performed at the house which in Islam possess a special kind of sanctity because it can be considered as the second 'mosque' in a Muslim community.

The idea of the mosque as a sacred place or memorial for the dead is again rejected since the analysis of the funerary practice reinforces the previous conclusions arrived at from the previous two chapters. The idea of a saint's or holy man's *baraka* flowing from his tomb mosque finds no place in the Sunnī doctrine of Islam.

Finally the fifth conclusion suggests that the initial concept of the mosque is as an important socio-political place. This conclusion reinforces those of the previous two chapters. This conclusion is arrived from the social implications of the congregational prayers, the idea of *i'tikāf* as spending time and effort for the community, the educational implications of Qur'ānic recitation and *dhikr* and a place where the community gathers to honour and pray for the deceased Muslim man or woman.

Chapter Six

THE IDEA OF THE MOSQUE IN RELATION TO THE MUSLIM'S INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, a discussion concerning the individual and collective responsibilities of the Muslim as they relate to the idea of the mosque is presented. It was stated that worship in Islam comprises not only the ritual form but also includes all actions toward the good of Islam. Part of these actions include the responsibilities of the Muslim towards his fellow Muslim and others. It is important then to assess the role of the mosque with regard to this aspect of Islam.

The *Qur'ān* and *Al-Ḥadīth* contain detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of the Muslim individual. These responsibilities can be separated into several relationships. They include the relationship between the Muslim and God, his family, his neighbour, his community and the Muslim people. The thesis discusses the last two responsibilities and examine their implications on the idea of the mosque.

6.1 The Muslim Responsibility towards the Community

There are two main responsibilities that Muslims have with regard to the community. The first is to foster the spirit of love and brotherhood among themselves. The second is to perform the social obligations to accomodate the rights of Muslims and all others.

6.1.1 The Brotherhood of Muslims

The first responsibility of the Muslim individual in the context of the community is to foster the feeling of love and the spirit of brotherhood among Muslims. This love will open up the soul to receive the spirit of God and elevate man to a higher state of being. The following *ḥadīths* and Qur'ānic Verses illustrate the importance of the brotherly love and the responsibilities of the individual that help to foster this love:

Narrated Abū Aiyūb Al-Anṣārī: Allāh's Apostle (peace be upon him) said, "It is not lawful for a man to desert his brother Muslim for more than three nights. It is unlawful for them that when they meet, one of them turns his face from the other and the better of the two will be the one who greets the other first."¹

Abū Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) observed, "You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love amongst you? It is greeting with as-sala mu 'ālaikum (may peace be upon you)."²

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying: "Don't nurse grudge and don't bid him out for raising the price and don't nurse aversion or enmity and don't enter into a transaction when the others have entered into that transaction and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allāh. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith :his blood, his wealth and his honour."³

¹ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, The Translation Of The Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī (Beirut: Dar-Al-Arabia, no date), Vol. 8, *ḥadīth* no. 100, pp.64-65

² Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1981), Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 96, p.37

³ Siddiqi, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 96, p.37

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying: Verily Allāh, the Exalted and The Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: "O Son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me." Man would say, "O my Lord how could I visit Thee whereas Thou are the Lord of the worlds?" Thereupon He would say, "Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam! I ask food of you but you did not feed Me." Man would say, "How could I feed Thee whereas Thou are the Lord of the worlds?" He would say, "Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? O son of Adam! I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me." Man would say, "My Lord, how could I provide Thee whereas Thou are the Lord of the worlds?" Thereupon He would reply, "Such and such servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me."⁴

It can, therefore, be observed why the Muslim is restrained from leading the life of an ascetic. To foster love amongst Muslim is one of the key to faith and success in this world and in the hereafter. The Prophet has indicated some ways in which this may be developed. Love between Muslims can be built by having good intentions, not being suspicious, not using abusive language and not being envious of one another. Secondly, the Prophet has taught the deeds which may cultivate this love through greeting, blessing the sneezer, forbidding competition between one another in prices, visiting the sick, quarrelling with each other and ignoring one another for over three nights, respecting and protecting each other's property, honouring and helping each other in life. These actions can certainly occur without the presence of a common meeting place but the chances of meeting each other every day is slim as the Muslim is busy all day long with work at various parts of the village or settlement. The opportunity for the performance of the daily congregational prayers provide this golden opportunity to inquire about each other's family and life. The idea of the mosque as the place most

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 6232, p.1363

frequented by Muslims whether during the daily prayers or at other times supports the importance of social interaction which forms the fundamental basis to develop and strengthen the brotherhood among Muslims.

6.1.2 The Islamic Social Obligations

The Muslim individual has many social obligations. For instance the need of the poor, the guests and the travelers must be seen to not only by the individual Muslims but also by the community. This is a great struggle for the Muslim because he is required to aid those who are Muslims and non-Muslims instead of his immediate family. The need to teach others and to learn about the religion is also a social obligation.

One of the Muslim's primary responsibilities concerns helping the poor. The following *ḥadīth*s describes the different type of poor in Islam and the exhortation to help them:

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying, "The poor man is not the one who goes around begging to the people and is dismissed with one or two morsel of food." They said, "Messenger of Allāh, who then is poor?" He said, "He who does not get enough to satisfy him, and he is not considered so (as to elicit the attention of the benevolent people) so that charity may be given to him, and he does not beg anything from people."⁵

Anas bin Mālik reported that some people came to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) and said to him: Send with us some men who may teach us the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Accordingly he sent seventy men from the Ansar. They were called the Reciters and among them was my uncle, Ḥarām. They used to recite the Qur'ān at night and ponder over its meaning and during the daytime they brought water in pitchers to the mosque, collected wood and sold it and with the sale proceeds bought food for the people of the Ṣuffa (the poor who stayed in the mosque of the Prophet) and the needy.⁶

Mundhir bin Jarīr reported on the authority of his father: While we were in the company of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon

⁵ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 2261, pp.496-497

⁶ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 4682, p.1053

him) in the early hours of the morning, some people came there who were barefooted, naked wearing stripped woollen clothes, or cloaks, with their swords hung around their necks. Most of them, nay, all of them belonged to the tribe of Muḍar. The colour of the face of the Prophet underwent a change when he saw them in poverty. He then entered his house and came out and commanded Bilāl to pronounce adhān. The Prophet then performed prayers with the Companions and then addressed them, reciting verses of the Qur'ān : "O people fear your Lord" until the end of the verse "...Allāh is ever a Watcher over you" and then he recited Sūra Hashr: "Fear Allāh, and let every soul consider that which it sends forth for the morrow and fear Allāh." Then the audience began to vie one another in giving charity. Some donated a dīnār, others a dirham, still others clothes, some donated a ṣa' of wheat, some a ṣa' of dates till the Prophet said, "Bring even if it is half a date. Then a person from among the Ansar came there with a money bag which his hands could hardly lift. Then the people followed continuously, till I saw two heaps of eatables and clothes, and I saw the face of the Messenger of Allāh glistening like gold on account of joy. The Messenger of Allāh said, "He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is a reward for him for this act of goodness and reward also of that who acted according to it subsequently, without any deductions from their rewards; and he who sets in Islam an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that and the burden of him also who acted upon it subsequently, without any deduction from their burden."⁷

Two kinds of poor persons are defined by Islam. The first are the ones such as the *ṣuffa* and the needy who are obvious to be seen by society. The Muslim society is responsible for seeing that their needs are met through careful planning and organisation. The second kind of poor are pious Muslims who are in need of material assistance but their piety prevents them from any external show of poverty. Their plight is only known to those who are intimately close to them. To help them, the Muslim individual is responsible to know intimately the other Muslims in order to ascertain their conditions. This is why Islam stresses a harmonious and intimate collective living not defined merely on the basis of social status or economic subdivision. The third are those who reside in the mosque either out of homelessness or with a desire for

⁷ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 2219, p.487

education or work toward the community. These 'poor' are similar to those of the *ahl-ṣuffa* during the time of the Prophet.

The second responsibility concerns the rights of guest. The *ḥadīths* concerning this subject are as follows:

It is reported on the authority of Abū Huraira that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) observed: He who believes in Allāh and The Last Day should either utter good words or be silent and he who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should treat his neighbour with kindness and he who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should show hospitality to his guest.⁸

Abū Shuraih Al-'Adawī reported: My ears listened and my eyes saw when Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) spoke and said, "He who believes in Allāh and the Hereafter should show respect to the guest even with utmost kindness and courtesy. "They said, "Messenger of Allāh, what is this utmost kindness and courtesy?" He replied, "It is for a day and a night. Hospitality extends for three days and what is beyond that is a form of Ṣadaqa for him."⁹

Abū Huraira reported that a person came to Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) and said: I am hard pressed for hunger. The Prophet sent a message to one of his wives to procure food but she answered: By Him Who has sent you with the Truth, there is nothing with me to serve except water. The Prophet sent the same message to all his wives and each of them said the same thing. The Prophet then said: Allāh show mercy to him who will entertain this guest tonight. A person from the Anṣār stood up and said: Messenger of Allāh, I am ready to entertain. He took him to his house and said to his wife: Is there anything with you to serve the guest? His wife answered: No, but only a subsistence for our children. He said: Distract their attention with something, and when the guest enters extinguish the lamp and give him the impression that we are eating. So they sat down and the guest had his meal. When it was morning the Anṣār went to Allāh's Apostle who said: Allāh is well pleased with what you both did for your guest this night.¹⁰

⁸ Siddiqi., Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 75, p. 32

⁹ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 4286, p.935

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 5100, p.1132

It can be seen that Islam stresses the right to treat guests whoever they are for three days and any effort beyond that is considered as charity. This means that the Muslim individual is obligated to treat the guest in the best possible manner. This requirement can be expanded to the collective level where the society will be responsible for providing facilities for these guests whether they were friends of the family or travelers seeking rest and shelter. Islamic Centres in the U.S.A. caters for this need by having the buildings opened 24 hours a day and putting a donation box with a sign that requires the Muslim traveller to contribute a certain amount of money after staying for three days. In other societies, such as those in Africa, Muslim travellers would stop by a 'traveller tree' where he would rest, pray and eat food provided by the families of the nearby villages. Throughout the history of Islam Muslim travellers such as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had traveled great distances with the aid of mosques as his temporary accommodation.

The third social obligation of the Muslim is to provide the facilities for the management of funerals.

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying, "Six are the rights of a Muslim over another Muslim. When you meet him, offer him greetings; when he invites you to a feast accept it, when he seeks your counsel give him, and when he sneezes and says 'All Praise is due to Allāh', you say 'May Allāh show mercy to you'; and when he falls ill visit him; and when he dies follow his bier."¹¹

Although the *ḥadīth* merely mentions the responsibility of following the bier the Muslim must also tend to the preparation of the body for burial. These responsibilities include washing the dead (usually done at the house of the deceased or at the mosque), dressing or wrapping the body in white cloth, constructing simple coffins to carry the body and the preparation of the graves where the body is laid to rest without the coffin. All these expenses are usually organised by a committee that collects monthly sums of money from Muslims and from this pool would settle the funeral expenses of any Muslim.

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 5379, p.1183

The fourth obligation involves the organisation of feasts for specific celebrations such as marriages, *'aḳīka* (slaughter of goats or cows to give thanks for the newborn child), *ḳurbān* (the slaughtering of cows, goats or camels during the *ḥaḍj* celebration) and many others. The following *ḥadīths* emphasises the importance of accepting invitations to feasts and to include the poor in the invitation:

Anas bin Mālīk reported: Abū Ṭalḥa sent me to Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) in order to invite him for a meal. So I came and found Allāh's Messenger along with some people. He looked at me and I felt shy and said: Accept the invitation of Abū Ṭalḥa. The Prophet asked the people to get up. Thereupon Abū Ṭalḥa said: Allāh's Messenger, I have prepared something for you. Allāh's Messenger touched the food and invoke blessings upon it and then said: Let ten persons from my Companions enter (the house). He then said: Eat, and in the meanwhile brought something from between his fingers for them. They then began to eat until they had their fill and then went out. He then invited ten more men and they ate to their fill, and then ten persons went in and out until everyone had had their fill. He then collected the remaining food and it was the same as it was prior to serving the guest.¹²

Abū Huraira used to say: The worst kind of food is the wedding feast to which the rich are invited and the poor are ignored. He who does not come to the feast, he in fact disobeys Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him).¹³

Feasts in the Muslim society are important in several respects. Firstly, they join the Muslim community into an intimate family. Secondly, they bring the poor and the wealthy together. Thirdly, feasts are also used by the Prophet to invite people to Islam in a family and brotherly spirit. The organisations of marriages and celebrations are among the most important functions that the mosque can cater towards reinforcing the brotherhood of Islam.

The final obligation is to help one another and to avoid animosity between Muslims. The following *ḥadīths* binds the Muslim in

¹² Siddiqui, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 5059, p. 1125

¹³ Ibid., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 3349, p. 728

a social contract so that he should not sit idly by when two parties are arguing or a Muslim is proven to be in great need of help:

Jābir bin 'Abdullah reported that two young men, one from the Muhājirīn (emigrants) and the other one from the Anṣār (helpers) fell into dispute and the Muhājir called his fellow Muhājirīn and the Anṣār called his fellow Anṣārī. In the meanwhile Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) came there and said, "What is this, the proclamation of the days of Jāhiliya (Ignorance)?" They said, "Allāh's Messenger, there is nothing serious. The two young men fell into dispute and the one struck at the back of the other." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said, "Well, a person should help his brother whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed. If he is an oppressor than he should be prevented from doing so and if he is the oppressed than he should be helped."¹⁴

Sālim reported that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) said: A Muslim is a brother of a fellow Muslim. He should neither commit oppression upon him nor ruin him, and he who meets the need of a brother, Allāh would meet his needs, and he who relieved a Muslim from hardship Allāh would relieve him from the hardships to which He would put on the Day of Resurrection, and he who did not expose the follies of a Muslim Allāh would conceal his follies on the Day of Resurrection (meaning to backbite).¹⁵

It is part of the idea of worship to help the Muslims in these situations. The greater function of the *imām* or leader of the community is not as a mere prayer official but to immerse himself into the day to day problems of the community and to encourage the Muslims to help one another.

It can, therefore, be seen that most of these responsibilities require planning and organisation at the community level. In the time of the Prophet they would take place in the mosque as it is the main place of assembly for the Muslims every day of the week.

¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 6254, p.1367

¹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 4, *ḥadīth* no. 6250, p.1366

6.2 The Muslim Responsibility towards the Umma

An important part of the Muslim responsibility includes duties which pertain to the interest of the Umma as a whole. These duties include the teaching and spreading of Islam, the preparation for the defence of the religion and the setting up of a political framework for the community which will be responsible to the Islamic Umma. Among this responsibilities the meaning and importance of *djihād* were discussed in a previous chapter. The other duties are illustrated from the following *ḥadīths* and Qur'ānic Verses:

'They are those who if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong. With God rests the ends and decisions of all affairs.'¹⁶

It is narrated on the authority of Ṭāriq b. Shihāb: Abū Sa'īd said: I heard the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) saying, "Who amongst you should see something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not enough strength to do it even then he should abhor it from his heart, and that is the least of faith."¹⁷

Narrated Abū Huraira : Once Allāh's Apostle offered two Rak'āt and finished his prayer. So Dhul-Yadain asked him, "Has the prayer been reduced or have you forgotten?" Allāh's Apostle (peace be upon him) said to the people, "Has Dhul-Yadain spoken the truth?" The people replied in the affirmative. Then the Apostle of Allāh stood up and offered the remaining two Rak'at and performed Taslīm, and then said Takbīr and performed two prostrations, and then got up after that.¹⁸

The implications from these *ḥadīths* and Verses are that the Muslims must interact with each other in order to discharge these duties of spreading, teaching the message and counseling one another in enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. It does not necessarily

¹⁶ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: Translation And Commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corp, 1983), Surā 22, Verse 41, p.862

¹⁷ Siddiqui., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 79, page 33

¹⁸ Khan, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 319, p.179

mean that the Muslims must be a kind of a police force and take matters totally into their own hands but by being tactful and using every available and rational means to control the community which they are a part of. There is no priesthood in Islam and the command of God and the Prophet lies on every able Muslim. These duties require special planning and detail preparations and involve the requirements of tools, space and furnitures . Although these activities can be performed in a special building other than a mosque , they are better conducted in the mosque for various reasons. Firstly the mosque is the best place to reach the people because they would have to attend the five obligatory congregational prayer. Secondly the full meaning of *'ibādāt* can be performed thus integrating the communal life with the spiritual one. Thirdly as a matter of convenience, the planning and execution of community projects require time and when the prayer time arrives it is easier to perform them at the same place.

6.3 Summary and Conclusion

The analysis of the roles and responsibilities of the Muslim was meant to indicate that the Muslim does not consider religion as a 'personal' ritual that is isolated from communal concerns. Contrary to this 'personal' attitude about religion and religious responsibilities, Islam maintains that the Muslim must strive within the socio-political concerns of the immediate community and the larger society. It is only then that he or she would have completed the full meaning of worship or *'ibādāt* in Islam. It is only then that the quest toward purification of the soul in search of God's spirit can be achieved as the personal self is purified from its selfish nature toward others. The life of the Muslim is the life of striving towards this end in his or her best possible effort. The striving ensures a fuller and successful life in this world and in the hereafter.

It can certainly be argued that most and even all of these responsibilities of the Muslim can be achieved outside of the mosque. However, it can be seen that these responsibilities include strategic planning and organisation involving the Muslim community. There must be a space or a place for these activities to occur. Whenever a group of Muslim converge to perform a particular activity that consumes great

amount of time, prayer must still be established at its stated times. The activity must stop briefly for *ṣalāt* and resumes immediately after. One can therefore see how the idea of the mosque can be established. This argument establishes that the need to converge and organise exist first and that *ṣalāt* comes second in the establishment of the mosque. However it can also be argued that the best meeting place for the community to organise activities is at the place where the Muslim converge five times a day which is at the mosque. This argument then maintains the priority of *ṣalāt* over the other socio-political activities. It cannot be ascertained here which of the two argument is the stronger one. What can definitely be ascertained that the idea of the mosque includes both aspect of ritual and non-ritual activities of *'ibādāt*.

Chapter Seven

THE INITIAL CONCEPT AND ETERNAL IDEA OF THE MOSQUE FROM THE SUNNĪ PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAM

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to gather the findings and conclusions in the previous chapters into a synthesis of what the initial conception and eternal idea of the mosque are. As stated in the beginning of the thesis it is important to ascertain what the eternal idea of the mosque is so that it could serve as a foundation in either the criticism of mosque designs in any period but more importantly as a design basis for mosques in the present time. It was also stated that the characteristics of the eternal idea can only be understood from the initial concept of the mosque during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The historical facts about the functions and meaning of the mosque must be clearly comprehended in the light of the meaning of Islam within the Sunnī orthodoxy. The mosque must be understood not only within the context of the associated religious rituals but also in a larger context of the communal responsibilities of Muslims. However, before proceeding to the definition of the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque we will firstly summarise the architectural historians' understanding of the idea of the mosque as presented in the second chapter of this thesis.

7.1 The View of Architectural Historians concerning the Idea of the Mosque

On the whole it can be concluded that the architectural historians are not interested about what the eternal idea of the mosque is. Although they are quite interested in the origins and the initial concept of the mosque, their aim was merely to establish a preconceived notion of the mosque as a unique Muslim 'sanctuary' whose architecture fits an established criteria of religious architecture. This preconceived idea of the mosque as a Muslim sanctuary leads most of the historians to accept the model of the Umayyad mosques as the true origins of the mosque. This position has led them to treat any mosque including the early Prophet's Mosque as part of a progressive architectural development towards its ultimate typology of the Umayyad mosque. The historians are mainly concerned about the formalistic and aesthetic aspects of the building's typological forms and architectural elements which they relate to the religious elements of Islam such as that of prayers and seclusion.

On the subject of interpreting the meaning of the mosque and its architectural elements, the historians have no interest in relating them to the eternal idea of Islam. In the early period of architectural history, the mosque was understood from the perspective of Islam as either a mystical oriental religion or a kind of Christian sectarian movement. The meaning of the mosque was understood very much within an architectural language of churches and temples of the Eastern religions. When architectural historians began to use more of the religious and historical sources of Islam, it is interpreted within the perspective of a secular understanding of religion. This has resulted in restricting the function of the mosque to those that are signified as 'religious rituals'. The integrated aspect of rituals and non-ritual worship in Islamic societies have never been given serious consideration in the analysis of the meaning of the mosque.

The arrival of Muslim historians and writers on the scene of architectural historical studies have not made the understanding of the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque any clearer. Although these historians offer a more sympathetic and inner perspective of Islam in their analysis of the meaning of the mosque, they have resorted more towards providing the mystical interpretation of the meaning of the

rituals in relation to the mosque. Their approach seems to stem mainly from an understanding of Islam from the Ṣūfī perspective.

Thus, to the historians, the mosque is nothing more than a house of worship whose main architectural concern is the provision of spaces conducive for meditation and prayer. The history of the development of the mosque has been outlined within this particular understanding of the idea of the mosque. To historians, in general, the Prophet's Mosque in his lifetime has no place of architectural significance aside from the fact that it was either a house that became sanctified as a mosque or a primitive shelter of activities that evolved into its ultimate type in the latter part of Islam. The eternal ideals of Islam related to the understanding of the mosque is buried under either a host of Ṣūfī rituals and mysticism or a secularist interpretation of religion where compartmentalisation between the religious and non-religious activities are strictly kept apart.

7.2 The Initial Concept of the Mosque

It is important to clarify the idea of the mosque present in the time of the Prophet. As was pointed out in chapter three, the word mosque was used in the Prophet's lifetime to refer to many kinds of houses of worship. It was used to describe the Sacred Mosque of Ka'ba, the Jewish temples and a general type of religious architecture. It was also used to describe a memorial tomb, a personal place of worship and also any place of prayer without the presence of any kind of building. There was also the idea of a memorial mosque built by the Muslims to commemorate certain events related to the Prophet. Admist all these mosque types, the Prophet's Mosque is the most important one that possess the initial conception of a mosque as it is most highly revered by the Muslims.

In order to ascertain the Prophet's conception of a mosque in Madīna during his life time, it is important to accept the assumption that it was probably derived out of certain necessary conditions, convenience and explicit intention. In order to understand the reasons behind the building of the Prophet's mosque it is important to review and analyse the historical context of his Hidjra. Why was the mosque

built and why had it contain the functions mentioned in the previous chapters?

The Prophet's flight to Madīna was an important historical event. The social and political situations in Makka had reached a hostile stage to such an extent that the Makkan polytheists were contemplating murder of their brethrens including the Prophet himself. The Prophet knew that even if he did reach Madīna safely, the Makkan polytheists would not let the small community of Muslims live to spread their religion. In addition to this problem, the Prophet was also aware of the probable fate of the Muslim community in Madīna with regards to the warring Jewish and Arab tribes there. He was probably most concerned about the Jewish tribes whom he knew were not happy with their opponents acceptance of the Prophet as the new leader of Madīna. Another important problem was the separation of the Makkan Muslim from their families and properties in the flight to Madīna. Most of the Muhajirin or those who emigrated, had left almost everything that they owned and love in Makka for fear of the retaliation of the Makkan polytheists if their secret flight was uncovered. The Prophet knew of the tremendous social problems he was to face upon entering his new life in a city of enemies, strangers and new Muslim converts.

In the context of these explosive conditions the Prophet arrived at Madīna and his first task was the construction of the most famous mosque of Islam. It was necessary to build a building as a shelter for the Prophet, his family and the homeless among the Muslims. Although the traditions mentioned that the emigrant Muslims were joined in an Islamic brotherhood with their Anṣār or 'helper' Muslims in Madīna, they were many who either out of their own choice or necessity resorted to staying at the mosque as part of the *ahl-ṣuffa*. Aside from the function of shelter and residence, it was important that the new building be the main assembly place of the Muslims. The Prophet had realised the important need to rally his supporters and to organise the social and political structure of the new community at Madīna. The mosque was the ideal place for this administrative function as the Muslim regularly meet for prayers and it was the safest place where the Prophet can be protected against the hostile forces of the Jews and the hypocrites of Madīna.

The Prophet had probably realised the important need to educate and train the Muslims. The mosque had served as the place where most of the Madīnan Revelations and his Sunna were heard and observed. That was why the *ahl-ṣuffa* increased in number since more Muslims joined not out of poverty and homelessness but purely to be with the Prophet and learn Islam directly from him. It was thus most convenient for the Muslims to live at the mosque for this purpose.

The mosque can also be considered as a fortress since the hostile situation and threats of impending war came consistently from all sides. The mosque was a military camp in the sense that it was the place where battle strategies were discussed far from the ears of the obvious enemies of Islam but unfortunately not from the ears of the Madīnan hypocrites. It was natural that the mosque became a place to treat the wounded in battle when war occurred between the Muslims and their enemies.

The idea of the mosque as a place for judicial proceedings was not a new one since many such proceedings had taken place around the Ka'ba in Makka. It was also natural that the Muslim assembly observe the new rules and regulations in practice as an educational activity and as a social deterrent. Punishments were held not only in public but also with the public's participation as an indication that they were all responsible for the social development of the community. The mosque was also a prison for the war captives since it was the most secure and safest place being the single place where Muslims are always present.

Since the mosque was the most frequented place, it was convenient that celebrations and social interaction took place there. The Muslim's strength of brotherhood can be seen to have developed well within the confines of the mosque where social celebrations, recreations and informal meetings were held. It was also where most of the news about deaths and sickness were passed on so that the Muslim can perform their social obligations of visiting and comforting the sick and preparing for the funerals of their fellow Muslims. The mosque was the natural place to collect and distribute alms or war booty since it functioned well as a secure place for the storage of communal wealth and the place of assembly of the Muslims.

What then is the position of *ṣalāt* relative to these functions? Was the mosque established for the performance of *ṣalāt*? The best possible answer is simply that prayer was one of the many functions of the mosque of the Prophet. If the question was asked whether it was essential to establish the mosque because of the *ṣalāt* requirement then the answer would definitely have to be in the negative. There is no definitive indication either in the *Qur'ān* or the *Al-Ḥadīth* that the presence of a sacred building is required for *ṣalāt*. The *ḥadīths* specifically mention that prayer can be performed anywhere that is considered physically clean from filth and that it was not used as a graveyard. The rewards of the congregational prayers specifically indicated that it was for the performance of prayers in congregation and the prophet had not stipulated that the congregational performance be particularly in the mosque. The *ḥadīths* had also indicated that the mosque is not a personal place of worship as the individual *sunna* prayer was recommended to be performed in the privacy of one's own home. It must be clearly understood that *ṣalāt* in Islam is a regular performance which occurs wherever the Muslim is found individually or in a group. If the Muslim community were a tribe or group that wandered from place to place such as the Bedouin Muslims were in the habit of doing, then *ṣalāt* and the mosque must be established wherever they stop. There is no need for any sanctification ritual. The site or building may be a temporary mosque in which case its 'sanctity' ends with the end of each *ṣalāt* or its sanctity ends only when the community leaves the whole settlement or site in search of a new place to live. Thus, the mosque of the Prophet was established more for the practical reasons concerned with the security and development and comfort of the community. *Ṣalāt* became one of its functions because it is most convenient to perform them where the community is gathered. This does not in any way belittle the function of prayer in Islam. Its performance in congregation must be established wherever the community of Muslim exists. In this respect it is safer to mention that the mosque exists because of all the social and ritual requirements of the community and not because of one or the other. It is also important to mention that it is impossible to ascertain the level of priority in all the functions as each function is supportive of and interrelated with one another.

The tribal mosque offers some important thoughts on the idea of the mosque. Although it is true from the *ḥadīths* that they had existed mainly out of the convenience of travel and the weather, it is important to understand that the Prophet had encouraged their construction in different tribes or localities. The implication from this approval may lead to the suggestion that the mosque is best at a place and of the size most convenient to a local community. It also implies that the mosque is best when it is small enough for the whole community to interact and know each other intimately. The Prophet's mosque can be considered as a small building since it held only a few hundred Muslims. It showed that the Prophet was not concerned with setting up a totalitarian state of Islam in which only his mosque was the only place valid to issue any kind of authority after his demise. It was an important aspect of the religion that the Muslim's brotherhood and unity was strengthened and thus a smaller mosque was better at that time. It was also important for security since the destruction of one mosque is not the end of the Islamic movement since mosques exist in many locations and that the leadership of the Muslim Umma can be transferred from one mosque to another.

Finally, in comprehending the initial concept of the mosque, its symbolic function must now be dealt with. Was there any kind of symbolic intent of the Prophet's mosque? It is difficult to deal with this issue since there are not many *ḥadīths* which directly relate to this issue. The *Kur'ān* merely mentions directly the symbolic rituals connected to the Holy Pilgrimage rites and the Ka'ba. These are construed as the sacred symbols of Islam. With regards to the *ḥadīths* on mosques it was pointed out in the previous chapters that there are only two types of sayings concerning this matter. The first type concerns the Prophet's admonishment against the construction of tombs and houses of worship on the graves of humans. The second type of *ḥadīths* concerns his admonishment of 'high' and 'decorated' mosques. The first type of *ḥadīths* suggest that Islam fears that the building of tomb mosques may lead the veneration of the dead which in turn may lead to the deceased person being accepted as another deity and as an intermediary to God. It was probably for this fear that the Prophet had strongly opposed the construction of any kind of objects that might lead to this blasphemous act. However, these *ḥadīths* do not necessarily lead to a negation of the

function or use of symbols or memorials as long as there was no opportunity of their being construed as a sacred object. The thesis cannot provide an ample discussion on this subject but merely concentrates on the issue of symbolic construction to the building of mosques.

The second type of sayings which concerns the building of high or decorated mosques suggests several views about mosque architecture. Firstly, it suggests strongly that the Prophet was warning the Muslims against the idea of wastefulness. Secondly, he may have been warning them against following the vices of the Christian, Roman and Persian cultures in their emphasis on aesthetic values. Thirdly, the Prophet may have been prophesying the social condition of the Muslim in the decades and centuries ahead where they would become as powerful and as immoral as those of the conquered empires. However the *ḥadīths* are interpreted, they suggest that the idea of symbolising a sense of pride or arrogance in the building of mosques contradicts the spirit of Islam. The attitude of Islam concerning this issue may be traced to the Prophet's own attitude about overly portraying the symbolic status of his person either in the manner of his relation to the Companions or in the clothes which he wears. There is a *ḥadīth* in which a stranger came to inquire who the Prophet was and he could not recognise the sacred person of the Prophet among the Companions in the mosque.¹ There is also a *ḥadīth* where the Prophet had forbidden the Companions to stand up to show respect whenever he arrives at a gathering.² There are also many *ḥadīths* on the simple attire of the Prophet which was not the result of poverty or poor taste but simply that he does not believe in portraying wealth on his person.³ There are *ḥadīths* which indicate that

¹ Abū Dharr and Abū Hurairar said: The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) used to sit among his Companions. A stranger would come, but did not recognise him (the Prophet) until he asked about him.

Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan Abu Dawud* (New Delhi: Al-Madina Publications (P) Ltd., 1985), Vol.3, *ḥadīth* no. 4681, p.1317

² Abu Umāmah said: The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) came out to us leaning on a stick. We stood up to show respect to him. He said: Do not stand up as foreigners do for showing respect to one another.

Ibid., *ḥadīth* no. 5211, p. 1443

³ Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar: Allāh's Apostle said, "Whoever drags his clothes (on the ground) out of pride and arrogance, Allāh will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection."

the Prophet had received vast amount of money and property in the form of donations and war booty but he has never showed any such inclination to use them to symbolise his position. It can be safe to suggest that the idea of the mosque as a monumental symbol of Islam or of the pride and glory of their clients is not within the spirit of the initial concept of the mosque. Although it has been argued by such scholars as Grabar that since the idea of art and the need to symbolise the greatness of Islam had not arisen at that time, the Prophet and his generation had no definitive ruling on the subject. This view merely imposes a set of value system on the function and nature of art on a different value system. Since the *ḥadīths* and Sunna of the Prophet are sacred, they must be seen in the light of the general principles of Islam and not to merely suggest the idea that Islamic values and attitude concerning art progress positively with time into its ultimate Western form.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the initial concept of the mosque was as a place where the Prophet could organise, administer, educate the Muslims about Islam and also as a bastion of defense against the enemies of Islam. This concept may have been derived partly from the Sacred Mosque of Makka as the Arab's political and social centre and partly out of the necessity of consolidating the early Muslims in a hostile situation. In the early and difficult days of Islam it was absolutely necessary to consolidate the Muslims and strengthen their unity in the Islamic brotherhood to face the oppressions and threats of the unbelievers. For all intents and purposes it was as much a fortress as it was the central social meeting place of the community. Its aesthetic quality was limited to the pragmatic concerns not because of poor artistic taste or poverty but more due to the Prophet's concern with illustrating the Islamic attitude regarding the idea of simplicity, wastefulness, object glorification, imitation of useless cultural values and most probably a desire to contrast the new religious centre from the houses of worship and political centres at that time.

7.3 Changes in the Initial Concept of the Mosque in Muslim History

The long history of Islamic civilisation saw many changes and development in the initial concept of the mosque. These changes and developments were mainly brought about by the different functions and roles the mosque had to cater for and perform. They were mainly caused by the personal, political and ritualistic needs of their clients who include the caliphs, sultans, religious scholars, Ṣūfī masters, governors, generals and the wealthy Muslim individuals.

When the forces of Islam fanned out into the Persian and Roman world the most important functions the mosque had to cater for was as a centre of administration and as a military fortress. Mosques were constructed usually outside of the conquered cities for many social and political reasons but the most probable reason of all was security. Thus the mosque grew in size which dwindle the scale of the Prophet's mosque. The mosque of Sāmārā' was probably the epitome of this mosque-fortress type.

When the Muslims settled in such cities as Syria where the Western and Eastern qualities of life met, the mosque became more symbolic in its role as the architectural representation of the supremacy of Islam over the conquered people. The mosque of Damascus was a testament to this idea. Mosques were then constructed in huge splendor as it was a kind of showpiece of the conquerors military might.⁴ One of the reasons why mosques were in the grand monumental scale was that it was also meant to cater for the great number of Muslims present in the city and to dwarf the many tribal mosques and *madrasas* which were mushrooming all over the places at that time. Creswell recorded a Muslim historian's account of how the Egyptian governor, Ziyad Ibn Abihi had requested the construction of his provincial mosque as a political tool to control the masses.⁵ The mosque in this respect was not only the symbol of a leader's totalitarian power but was the most effective media to influence the public's attitude concerning many matters.

⁴ Creswell quotes, in his *Short Account Of Muslim Architecture* (p.18), a conversation recorded by two Muslim historians between two Muslims in the time of Al-Walid concerning the validity of the caliph's expensive architectural projects which is meant to rival the splendour of the Christian churches.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12

When the Umayyad caliphs began to show their disinterest in propagating the ways of the Sunna, the religious scholars took the responsibility of preserving and developing the religious values and knowledge of the *Qur'ān* and the Sunna to the Muslim masses. They began to teach at their houses which turned into mosques and latter developed into the *madrasa* institution. The *wakaf* or endowments of Muslims were managed by a certain committee which saw to it that the spread of Islamic knowledge was assured.

The turbulent political upheaval of the 'Abbāsid period and the increase in the support for the Shī'a and Ṣūfī sects of Islam gave rise to another kind of mosque which was in direct contradiction to the initial concept of the mosque. The mosque became a memorial building and a sacred place where the Ṣūfī teachers and sacred *imāms* of the Shī'a Muslims were buried. Rituals of venerating the dead developed at this time and the mosque received a religious quality of a tomb emanating the blessings of the dead which was alien to the fundamental principles of Islam.

The overly spiritual emphasis was continued and was given the final assurance when the office of the *imām* as the prayer leader and not as the community leader was initiated by the later 'Abbāsid caliphate. The mosque also lost its function as a judiciary court after the establishment of the Dār-al-Ḥakam as a separate courthouse during the reign of the 'Abbāsid.

The administrative role of the mosque was eliminated when the caliphs separated the governmental functions into the palace or the governor's residence. The treasury was removed from its place in the mosque to a separate structure or as part of the palace complex. Soon all of the mosque's traditional functions were stripped from its initial concept and only the function as a place of ritual worship had remained. When the Muslim world crumbled because of internal strife, foreign influences and colonisation, the mosque remained as the final bastion of ritual worship.

It is, thus, in the modern world which the Muslims are disillusioned by the backwardness of Islam and the advances of the non-Muslim world that the mosque became part of a cultural heritage where it serves the ritual function of worship seen only as a mere cultural activity without consequences to the greater part of life. The mosque

became a place of seclusion for those who withdrew from the challenges of modern life and for the old to meditate on their final days. It has no longer any significance for the development of the society but exists only because of the presence of a few individuals who still believes in continuing a traditional heritage. From a modern government's perspective, the mosque was nothing more than a cultural symbol and a political tool to pacify any accusation on the opposition's part that it has totally severed its relationship with the past.

Presently, the Muslim world are witnessing what they consider to be the collapse of the Western ideals of secularism in their social and political structures. The image of Western idealism as the savior of mankind was destroyed as the West was shown to be bias in their treatment towards the welfare of countries with Muslims as the majority. The Muslim countries are also witnesses to their own decline in social, economic, intellectual and political structure where their half hearted attempts at imitating the Western way of life proves disastrous. These phenomenons have sparked a wave of Islamic resurgence in calling the Muslims to the path of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna*. Islam became an important alternative to the Western ideals. Most Muslim countries with their secular government structures and nationalistic inclinations have tried to pacify the new wave of Islamic resurgence. One of the result was the change in the emphasis of the mosque in its building and institution. In order to meet the demands of the increase emphasis in the place of the mosque in the Muslim society and the call to the return of the fundamental values of Islam, mosques were built with the idea of symbolising the greatness of Islam's architectural heritage. Additional spaces were added to the mosque to echo the multi-functional nature of the mosque of the Prophet. In the midst of this mosque building frenzy, clients and builders of mosques paid little attention to developing the proper programmes of the mosque activities but merely emphasise the compromise between the mosque as a historical symbol and the modern secular lifestyle. As was stated earlier, the governments of the Muslim countries who still believe in secularism have developed the mosque idea in order to pacify the demands of the Muslim resurgent movements who command a great influence among the people. The governments usually have no interest in the Islamic programmes other than to maintain their status of political power. They,

therefore, have offered no serious programme of the mosque other than giving in to some of the ritual demands of the Muslim resurgent groups. The Islamic resurgent groups, on the other hand have offered various programmes for adapting the Islamic way of life but has very little to mention about the purpose of the mosque except to vaguely indicate that it should be in the spirit of the Prophet's mosque. They offer no thought on how the mosque should help create the spirit of Islam in the lifestyle of the Muslim in the present time. Although, judging by the great number and costs of mosques being built today, there seems to be more money spent in the construction of bigger and more splendid mosques equipped with many facilities, these mosque were built with very little consideration of how best the mosque could serve the Muslim communities in the world. The strategy was to compromise some aspect of the initial concept of the mosque of the Prophet with some contradictory ideas of the mosque in the times of the Umayyad and the 'Abbāsid without evaluating the consequences of their integration.

7.4 The Eternal Idea of the Mosque

The initial concept of the mosque was the result of the struggle of the infant Muslim community in the hostile political situations of that time. It was also the result of certain cultural continuity of what a house of worship and the tribal '*madjlis*' were. Most of the functions of the mosque were dictated by the need and necessity of providing shelter for the convenience of the community. However, it must be clearly understood that the mosque of the Prophet was a clear product of the first generation of Muslims which represents a model *par excellence* of the Islamic way of life.

Later on, most of these early functions of the mosque changed by either being emphasised or repressed throughout the history of Islam. The history of Islam had also added certain functions which had not existed during the time of the Prophet. Most of the new functions of the mosque were the result of the personal requirements of the patrons who had seek other motives alien to the Islamic values. It is, therefore, important to identify the characteristic of the mosque which can be described as eternal or unchanging in order to base any modern design and evaluation of the mosque on. The eternal idea is the

fundamental concept of the purpose and function of a mosque that must be present in any mosque of whatever culture, provenance and time. The eternal idea of the mosque is the essence of the spirit of the mosque derived directly from the teachings of Islam in the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet's *Sunna*.

The first and most important characteristic about the eternal idea of the mosque is its existence is not as necessary as the existence of a sacred object of worship. The mosque by itself as a building or as a space is not a sacred idea or one that is absolutely necessary for the performance of worship. If there exist only a single Muslim in a deserted island or in a community of unbelievers, there is no need to build a mosque or to consecrate a particular site as a mosque. Even if there exist a community of two or more Muslims in a hostile social and political situation they bear no responsibility to build a mosque if by that very act they may suffer extreme hardship from the society there were in. In these particular situations the individual Muslim and the Muslim community can perform their ritual and non-ritual worship without the presence of a building considered as a mosque.

The second characteristic of the eternal mosque to be understood is that the mosque can be considered as sacred only in so far as the prohibitions and supererogatory rituals associated with it. The mosque is a place where no Muslim in a state of major ritual defilement may enter. It is also the only place where the performance of *i'tikāf* and the *Taḥiyyah al-Masḍjid* are valid. It must be clearly stated that the mosque does not exist solely because of these two rituals but that the two rituals exist only where a mosque exist.

The third characteristic concerns the idea of sanctity and consecration. The act of consecrating a space or a building implies a kind of sanctity of the site or building. First of all it is essential to understand that Islam holds no object or site as sacred in any sense of the word with the exception of the three Sacred Mosques in Islam. These Sacred Mosques are unique as they cannot be transplanted to any other place because their sanctity relates directly to their historical contexts. Their sanctity is clearly upheld by the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet. The community mosque in Islam is considered as sacred only in so far as its existence created certain prohibitions and ritual. The sanctity of the mosque is related directly to the prohibition of the presence of

menstruating women and persons of major defilement, the performance of *i'tikāf* and the performance of the Taḥiyyah al-Masḍjid. It must be clearly understood that only with the existence of the mosque that all of these prohibitions and ritual can come into effect. It is not because of *i'tikāf* or the Taḥiyyah Masḍjid Prayer that the mosque must be built or that it is sanctified. The rituals exist because the mosque existed. If the mosque ceases to exist, the prohibition and rituals cease to exist too. Furthermore, both the rituals are non-obligatory ones and do not occupy positions of great importance in the Sunnī approach of Islam. It is only with the Ṣūfī approach of Islam that the ritual of *i'tikāf* and meditation are isolated as acts of the greatest significance. The idea of mosque sanctity is also related to the institution of *wakaf* in Islam. *Wakaf* is a form of public endowment of properties for the benefit of Muslims. Islam encourages this kind of charity as the Prophet has mentioned that their benefits in this world is one of the three ways in which the Muslim can receive rewards after his or her death. The *wakaf* properties must be managed carefully so that they can truly be of use to the general public. If the mosque building or some part of it was a direct investment of the *wakaf* of any particular Muslim, they become sacred in the sense that their use generate blessings and rewards to that particular person. In this respect the materials of the building or some part of it cannot be discarded in the event of the mosque being renovated but must be utilised in a manner that it can once again be useful and functional so that the rewards and blessings for the deceased donor can continue. The mosque is sacred only as a product of public endowment. Thus the mosque in the Sunnī perspective is not considered as a sacred object if by that it is meant a building built by sanctifying a site, to enclose a revered religious object, to enclose a sacred site, for the performance of an important religious ritual or because the building itself is a sacred object.

Thus, although there is no act or ritual of consecration required in the building of a mosque, it is necessary that all the parties concerned and involved in the construction be clear about the intention of a particular space, a building or a space in a building to be a mosque for which the idea of sanctity as mentioned above to be in effect. In this sense, although a whole building may be called a mosque, there may be only a single space that was intended to be the 'sacred' space. In this particular sense the prohibitions and the rituals mentioned above is

active only within the confines of this particular space. It must also be clearly understood that although this sacred space is special due to the prohibition and rituals, it does not mean that no other function except prayer can be performed in it.

The fourth important characteristic is that the mosque in Islam is the house of the community. It is not the house of God in the sense of a temple or any such building holding a scared relic or icon but simply a place owned, governed and maintained by the community it caters for. It is also a building, once constructed, belonging to all the Muslims in the world and their rights in any mosque is assured as those who had constructed it. It is the house of the community and its very nature is as a multi-functional building. The building contains the functions of administration, education, prayer, welfare, social activities and judiciary. The following paragraphs provides an idea of the spirit of these functions and its limited scope of applications.

One of the functions of the mosque is as an administrative centre. Wherever a Muslim community exists, the Muslims have to discharge many social obligations. The organisation of activities pertaining to these responsibilities require a recognisable political structure. It must be recognised that this function may expand and be so complex that it may become a specific institution by itself such as the parliamentary body or any such kind, which is separated from the functions of the mosque. The case of the palace and the governor's residence separating from the mosque attest to this inevitable eventuality. However, the mosque must still possess a political structure of the community that it caters for. The best mosque is the ones that has an independent political structure from the central governing body of a Muslim country. The mosque then provides a supportive function to this body when the actions and programmes of the central government does not contradict the spirit of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna*. The community mosques must perform the role of reminding and criticizing the central government whenever the government shows any indication of straying from the true path. The Muslim individual must perform these duties with respect to the governing body of the mosque which he or she resides and the local mosque institution in turn must act in the same way to the central governing authority. It is only in this way that Muslims can discharge their important duty of encouraging the good and forbidding

the evil. If the mosque were to be stripped of its independence in authority, it serves no more than the dictatorial voice of a totalitarian authority.

The need for education is one of the most crucial functions which a mosque must cater for. The mosque caters more towards the function of educating the community about matters pertaining to the survival and positive development of the community. It is admitted here that the mosque cannot serve as the educational centre for all types of education. The presence of educational institutions separate from the mosque is inevitable since they can cater more towards the teaching of many separate intellectual and professional disciplines. The mosque has a more important role of educating the lay Muslims of the various concerns that may effect the social, economic and political fabric of the Muslim community. It should function as a place where the Muslim children learn about the history, ritual and values of the Islamic religion. The mosque should function as the place not only for the ritualistic education of the Muslim man and woman but also about the basic sciences, economics and political aspects of knowledge for them to discern the social issues in the contemporary world that have direct bearing on the Muslim society. The mosque can also serve as the place for training special skills and counseling for its members with special social ills. In essence the educational aspect of the mosque is essential for the development of the Muslim community and serves as an important mediator between the Muslim society steeped in their traditional heritage and the advances in knowledge in the Muslim and non-Muslim world.

The *ṣalāt* ritual is one of the main functions of the mosque. As previously indicated, the mosque is not a necessary part of the *ṣalāt* ritual. *Ṣalāt* can be performed at any place that can temporarily be considered a prayer place. There are no special rewards mentioned by the Prophet for praying at a mosque. It is important to understand that the mosque serves as a most convenient place for the performance of the congregational prayers where the great rewards of praying lie. The mosque is not the best place for personal devotions such as the performance of the *sunna* prayer, personal *dhikr* or Qur'ānic recital. The only personal devotions encouraged are the Taḥiyyah al-Masdjīd Prayer and the *i'tikāf*. It must be remembered that *i'tikāf* is not

similar to personal meditation or seclusion as in monasticism. It was shown that *i'tikāf* has as much a social implication in the mosque as that of the congregational prayer. Although it was mentioned that *ṣalāt* is not the most important function of the mosque, its obligatory establishment at the community level helps to foster the important meetings and gatherings for the Muslims to discharge their social obligations. The social dimension of *ṣalāt* is one of the important aspects of the idea of the mosque in Islam.

The function of welfare for the needy is part of the spirit of the mosque and the social obligations of the community. Although most of the functional aspects of welfare can better take place in buildings separate from the mosque, it is nevertheless essential that the mosque retains some form of supportive role in this respect. Throughout history, mosques have provided temporary shelters for the poor, homeless, students and travellers. They have also provided some form of sustenance to these people. Since one of the important social obligations mentioned in the *Qur'ān* is charity towards these people, the mosque is the best place for them to discharge this responsibility. Although the idea of giving monetary contribution to a centralised body which manages the alms giving process is important and necessary, the Muslim does not see the end result of his or her contribution. It would be better for the Muslims who are well off to actually come in contact themselves with the needy such that their compassion for them may increase and their feeling of hatred against poverty is strengthened. The function of welfare in Islam does not include providing food and shelter for those who are able to work. The Prophet and the Companions had never taken kindly to beggars who have healthy physical condition with sound minds. It is important for the mosque to guide these people into a situation of independence and not merely provide blindly their needs which encourages their begging activities. The essential idea thus in this respect is that the mosque becomes a place where the Muslim congregants come in direct contact with some of the social problems of their community and as the most convenient place for them to contribute alms in the form of charity or as the expiation for certain rituals which he or she is unable physically to perform.

The judicial function of the mosque is also important with respect to providing a medium where the public may witness the laws of

Islam in action, as the place where the Muslim may educate himself about these laws and where he would learn to fear and respect the weight of the law in Islam. Although it is necessary in many cases that a separate courthouse than the mosque be built to manage the many court cases, it is again important that the mosque still retain some of the role of judicial process. In the present time all of the judicial proceedings occur outside of the mosque and even outside of the community in an alien place to the participants of the proceedings. The mosque offers the opportunity for all who are concerned with such a process to know one another as they are part of a single small community and thus the affairs of the people in the court cases may better be testified. The Muslim has the obligation of not only understanding the laws himself but also of upholding it against corrupt lawyers and judges. In the present situation most Muslims are unaware of the social and criminal laws which govern their community and only comes into contact with it when an offense take place which involves themselves or their families. If some of the judicial proceedings were to be held in the mosque, Muslims who frequents the mosque and those who has only come to pray will inevitably be exposed to such proceedings and thus be able to learn from it.

The sixth function of the mosque related to its use as the house of the community is the social uses. The mosque serves as the place where the informal gatherings of Muslims can occur. It is important that the mosque administrative committee organise celebrations and social functions with the single intention of bringing the Muslims together and fostering the Islamic brotherhood. It is only through mutual social interaction that Muslims would meet and acquaint themselves with their brethren in Islam. The mosque provides various opportunities for the strengthening of brotherhood in the prayer meetings, educational programmes and many other activities. The importance of brotherhood in Islam has already been stressed and the mosque can help to generate and stimulate the social programmes toward this end.

The final function of the mosque relates directly to its relationship to the non-Muslim in the community. In the Prophet's mosque, debates between the Jews, the Christians and the pagan Arabs were held within its walls. This function of the mosque reflects one of the important responsibilities of the Muslim which is to explain the way

of life of Islam to others. Islam has never demanded that Muslims convert the non-Muslims into their fold but merely require that they are held responsible only in explaining the religion in the best manner possible. Thus the mosque is an excellent resource centre not only for the formal education of the non-Muslim about Islam but also the place to absorb personally the Islamic social and political atmosphere of the community. Although there are opinions with regards to the prohibited presence of non-Muslims in mosques by some scholars, most agree that the prohibition is restricted only to the space in the building which is also prohibited to the Muslim person who is under major ritual defilement. Although this opinion is contradicted by some scholars in the examples of the Prophet in allowing non-Muslims in his mosque, the prohibition must be stipulated carefully in particular cases where the Muslim find themselves in a non-Muslim environment.

The final characteristic of the eternal idea of the mosque is the question of the mosque as a symbol. It was argued in the previous section that Islam does not favor outward show of grandeur with the view of portraying pride, arrogance and the wastefulness of resources. The prohibition against this type of symbolic manifestation of the mosque is directly related to the primary intention of the patron. If the patron feels a desire to create a building with the intention of portraying his greatness or wealth, then the prohibition and admonishment of the Prophet applies in this case. Even though there are religious verdicts allowing such a building to be built, these verdicts are mostly passed probably by those under the direct services of mosque patronage. Their verdicts are questionable in the light of the spirit of the Prophet's Sunna. It is adequate that the mosque be recognised as a mosque to a stranger in a Muslim settlement. The symbolic function allowed in this respect is only as an architectural sign.

7.5 Summary and Conclusion

It can, therefore, be seen that, with the exception of the mosque as a fortress, prison and the house of the leader, the Prophet's conception of the mosque in his lifetime mirrors the eternal idea of the mosque in Islam. It is a multi-functional facility with the purpose of

organising and developing the Muslim community in most aspects of the Islamic way of life. It is truly the 'house of the community' more than as a 'house of God'. The idea is supported not only from the fact that the Prophet had established it as such but also from the arguments of the principles of Islam with regards to the social obligations of Muslims. The history of the Muslim people has seen the idea of the mosque distorted by the emphasis of some of its eternal characteristic and the direct violation of some of the prohibited characteristics. The mosque can be said to have been lacking in its full potential if only the function of prayer is emphasised. The mosque can be said to have failed altogether as a centre for the community when the function of symbolism and memorial is introduced without due considerations for the other functions of the mosque. It is, therefore, important to be clear on the eternal idea of the mosque in the design and programme development of a mosque in any community. The eternal idea is true for all Muslim communities whether the communities are classified as 'primitive' with respect to modern physical living standards or in the communities currently living a lifestyle similar to those found in the Western society. The challenge here is to develop a guideline of mosque design criteria for the latter type of Muslim communities as they are the ones that can be assumed to the greatest number in the world at present. This challenge must suggest an answer to the modern day to day concerns of Muslims in the modern age. This will be the subject of the next chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Eight

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DESIGN OF A MODERN MOSQUE IN THE SUNNĪ MUSLIM CONTEXT

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have described the characteristics of the eternal idea of the mosque. The present chapter contains a description of the design guideline of the modern mosque based on the consideration of the characteristics of the eternal idea of the mosque and the special considerations of the needs and lifestyles of the modern Sunnī Muslim society. However, before the guideline is described, we present a discussion on the the social problems related to the mosque and the modern living patterns of Muslims. From an understanding of these patterns, a framework of mosque activities is derived and defined in a manner which have direct implications on the identification of architectural spaces and spatial relationships. The final part of the chapter contains a detailed analysis of three mosques as a sample of case studies in the light of the design guideline which was developed.

8.1 An Overview of the Modern Living Patterns of Muslims Related to the Functions and Accessibility of Mosques

The West has introduced many aspects of the modern lifestyles which are not contradictory to the Muslim way of life. One of these are the working and living patterns of people in modern cities and

housing estates. As with many people of the world, Muslims flock to the cities to work in private offices, commercial centres, health centres, government buildings and many other building types for about 8 hours each day during five or six days of the week. They would spend another 2 or three hours commuting from their homes in the housing estates to their work places in the cities. During working hours they would be allowed a one hour lunch break. This is thus, the modern working patterns which the Muslim has adopted. In this new pattern of life the Muslims are in the cities usually during the Zuhr and 'Asr periods where they would pray during the lunch break and also after normal office hours. However, in cities where winter days are shorter and the two prayers occur during the working hours, the Muslim is forced to take time off from their busy work schedule to perform the daily congregation prayers. With the design of the huge mosques which is supposed to be able to accommodate all the city inhabitants in their island sites, the Muslim finds it difficult to present himself at the stated prayer times. Traffic congestion takes much of the travelling time away from work and thus results in mosques being almost empty of congregants. In many Muslim countries, Muslims working in large buildings prefer to perform the daily prayers in the special rooms allocated by their employers within the buildings themselves. Since these buildings usually have their own cafeterias and leisure rooms there is very little incentive for Muslims to be present at mosques outside of their buildings. The mosque as a monumental symbol isolated from the urban fabric of the city can hardly compete with the modern conveniences of today's multi-purpose skyscrapers. The solution to this problem lies in the integration of the mosque in these large building complexes. It is undoubtedly an unpopular solution to those patrons who want a highly visual architectural presence as their personal symbols.

Another problem which is related to the pattern of city life is how the mosque functions to create a conducive atmosphere for social interaction when the only time available is the short one hour lunch breaks which most workers have. The answer points to the provision of facilities that would make the one hour presence in the mosque most beneficial. The most obvious functions which city mosques must possess are those that people would normally use during their lunch hours. Their activities during this short break includes praying, eating,

recreational activities, shopping, going to the post office or to the banks. If most of these facilities can be incorporated in the mosque, it would stand a better chance of being peopled and where Muslims congregate, the mosque committees may arrange some light educational activities for the congregants to pass the time. It is only in this way that a mosque can perform its purpose as a place of fostering the Islamic spirit and brotherhood to the working Muslim communities in the cities.

The modern housing estates present two main problems to the present traditional mosque design concepts. The first problem is related to high density living and the second to family living patterns. Traditional mosque capacity has always been determined by a loose definition of the *qariah* which simply means 'neighbourhood'. In the past, houses are single or double storey dwellings generously spread over a certain bounded area known as the 'village'. The same village area can now hold as much as four or five times the traditional living density. Apartment blocks and low rises have changed the traditional village pattern of life. Muslim scholars must redefine the rule governing the *qariah* especially related to the mosque's congregational capacity and geographical boundary. This problem can only be approached by identifying the criteria for optimum neighbourhood capacity for a Muslim community.

The other problem confronted by the modern mosque in relation to modern housing estates concerns the family living patterns of a Muslim community. How does the mosque perform its function as a place to foster social interaction among the families in a community with their busy work schedules which frequently finds not one but both the parents at work half of the day? The answer lies in the mosque having to provide many of the needs of the family such as play spaces for children, recreational facilities, children and adult libraries, grocery and book shops, food stalls, postal and banking services. In this way, families can bring their children for a whole day at the mosque where both children and parents can fulfil their daily activities while participating in the mosque's specific educational and social programmes. It can, therefore, be easily seen why the present mosques are frequently empty six days of the week and that the Muslim families in the same community find themselves alienated from one another. Other than the fact that it is

solely designed as a prayer place, the mosque designers fail to anticipate the modern needs of the present Muslim society.

It is for these reasons that the present mosque design principles must be reexamined. Since they were based on a set of architectural programmes which, in turn, is derived from the premise of the mosque as a house of worship, it is necessary to redefine the architectural programmes of the mosque in order to incorporate its eternal characteristics and also meet the needs of the modern lifestyles of the Muslim in the present time.

The thesis proposes a new mosque design principle based entirely on a general set of architectural programme theoretically derived from two different sources. The first source comprises the social and communal needs of Sunnī Muslims in the present time. The second source consists of the qualities and characteristics of the eternal mosque in Islam. The needs of the Sunnī Muslims are assumed from two different sources. The first source is the general social obligations of the Muslim society and the second takes into account the special problems and needs related to the present lifestyle of modern Sunnī Muslims.

8.2 The Social Obligations, Special Needs and Problems of Modern Sunnī Muslims related to the Requirements of Mosque Design

In order to derive a set of architectural programme of a building, it is important to understand the needs of its users. The mosque belongs and is designed for the Muslim community and, thus, it is important to know what the needs and requirements are. Although these needs may vary culturally, there is a possibility of deriving a set of general needs valid for all Muslim societies. One reason is because the basic communal responsibilities and obligations of the Muslims are eternal and must be fulfilled by all Muslims at all time. However the implementation of the activities related to these responsibilities and obligations are subject to the lifestyle and culture of particular Muslim communities. It is only through the understanding of both aspects of the Muslim community that the practical needs can be fully ascertained.

8.2.1 The Social Obligations of the Muslim Community

The social responsibilities and obligations of the Muslims were discussed in chapter seven. It was mentioned earlier that since there is no priesthood in Islam, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to organise their community in such a manner that the social obligations of the religion can be discharged and that the development of the community socially, intellectually and spiritually can take place. First and foremost is the importance of setting up a political and administrative structure to facilitate and organise all the social obligations of the community. Those in the political structure are charged with the responsibility of organising activities related to education, welfare, judiciary, religious rituals and fostering unity and brotherhood among the Muslims. The Muslims, in turn, must support the political structure and aid the community leaders in their programmes as far as these activities do not contradict either the practice or spirit of the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

The Muslims are required to develop the activities that would enable them to achieve the social objectives of the ideal Muslim community. However, the manner and scope of these activities are very much constrained by the cultural needs and lifestyle of the Muslims in a particular place and time.

8.2.2 The Needs and Problems of Modern Sunnī Muslim Societies Related to Mosque Design

There are several characteristics of the modern lifestyle of the Sunnī Muslims that must be considered in deriving any set of design criteria for mosques in the present time. These characteristics can be classified into those related to the manner of life and the material products of modern life.

The first characteristic of the modern life concerns the relationship between living and working conditions. There are two general types of social conditions with respect to these. The first can be considered as the traditional group and the second can be called the modern group although both groups are modern in the sense of their existence in the present time. What is meant by traditional in the above classification is simply those Muslims who live and work at the same

place. The word 'work' in this case refers to activities that sustain life and include education, social organisation and apprenticeship. All of these activities occur in a geographical area within a reasonable walking distance from the residential part of a settlement. The different social classes of the elderly, the adults and the young live and interact in a small settlement usually known as villages. However, there are also some societies living this traditional way of life that resides in compact locations in cities with a character much like that of medieval Muslim cities.

The second type of lifestyle which is called 'modern' is the one most commonly found in the world today. It comprises of people who live in one place but work in another. They can be said to lead two different lives where one part is in the villages or suburban residential areas and the other spent in cities. This way of life results in the elderly being left in the residential areas, the adults earning their livelihood in the cities and the young being either in the residential areas or learning in another part of town. It is this aspect of modern life that the modern mosque designer must take special considerations. It implies two separate lifestyles and, therefore, two separate needs concerning the mosque. It is important to define the needs of the working part of life and the living part since they occur at different times in the day and week.

The modern life of Muslims is also characterised by the multi-religious lives of the greater community of a particular country. Although there are a great number of Muslims living together as a single community in many countries in the world there are more communities which are made up of different religious and non-religious groups. It is common to find Muslims living among non-Muslims. Living in a single Muslim community is not a requirement in Islam. It is only when Muslims are under threat that their congregating in a single community is recommended. The mosque designer must understand the relationship between the mosque and the non-Muslims in order to define the places and areas where their interaction with Muslims can occur.

The third characteristic of the modern life concerns the implications of working parents on the family lifestyle of the Muslims. In the past, women and the extended family live in the vicinity or together in the same area. The main task of bringing up children falls

mainly on the women and the grandparents who are too old to earn a livelihood. However, in the present time both women and men possess greater educational opportunity than ever before which results in both parents pursuing their own careers. The problem arises with the question of the spiritual and moral education of the young who are of the school or pre-school ages. It is not much of a problem if the Muslim lives in an environment where the extended family of grandparents, relatives and kins were living in the same place or in the same area. The social norms of Islam can then be passed on from the old to the young. However, with the present mobility of modern life, Muslims find themselves living and working outside of the circle of the extended families. The use of servants and helpers do not necessarily answer the need of educating and developing the young. The answer seems to be in the existence of day care centres and kindergartens to assist with this aspect of social development. It is important to consider what role the mosque can play with regard to this need.

The modern lifestyle of Muslims is also characterised by the presence of certain types of settlements and technological products. The first important product of the modern age directly related to the present lifestyle is the existence of different types of human settlements. There are three general types of settlements which we shall refer to as the village, the town or city and the suburban estates. The village model relates directly to the traditional lifestyle of Muslims where living and working conditions can be found. The suburban model is the product of the modern lifestyle discussed previously where living and working conditions are separated geographically. In the case of the city or town, there are two distinct types of lifestyles involved. The first type of cities or towns contain facilities for commercial and office functions and temporary accommodations for the people commuting to the cities. The city's inhabitants are present during the day time and leaves during the night time until the next day. The second type of city life consists of people both living and working in the cities much like the old cities of the past. There are, therefore, two different sets of needs in relation to the mosque programme. The first set of needs caters for the village and city living type where as the other set of needs caters for the suburban and temporary city occupancy.

The technological advances of modern life have added the sky scraper and high rise to the city landscape. It has also encouraged the existence of multi-functional complexes to cater for the varied needs of modern life. There are high rises that are either used as single function buildings or multi-functional purposes. There are those that contain primarily office spaces or those which are used as condominiums. The technology of the skyscraper has made possible the 'vertical city' to comprise of varied functions of shelter, commerce and office uses in a single building. This century has also witnessed the growth of huge shopping malls catering for the commercial, recreational and entertainment needs of the city inhabitants. The idea of combining the different uses under one roof is partly a commercial endeavour where in creating spaces for people to meet and interact socially and professionally can result in increased commercial returns. It is also one of the few ways where people are able to interact under an environmentally controlled place without the need to concern themselves about the weather and parking spaces. It can be seen that these new building types have created a different city culture and lifestyle and it is important to understand how the mosque can play its important role in the modern Muslim community. The implications of the above mentioned characteristic concerns directly the size and siting of mosques in the present time.

Finally, the modern life is popularly characterised by the transport mode of the people in this era. The bicycle, motorcycle, cars and buses are the products of the modern era that have increased the frequency and distance of travel of the people. Increased and faster travel distances result in wider personal communication between individuals and families. Aside from the obvious problems of parking associated with the design of any modern buildings, the implication of transportation also directly concerns the idea of the ideal geographical size and area of communities.

8.3 A Theoretical Framework of Mosque Architectural Programme

In order to develop a general mosque architectural programme, it is necessary to evaluate the social needs of the Muslims

from the perspective of the eternal idea of the mosque. As previously mentioned, the eternal idea of the mosque is as a building mainly for the organisation and development of the Muslim community in all aspects of life. To achieve this purpose the mosque must be situated in a more 'permanent' social context. What is meant by permanent in this sense is that it must be situated where there is frequent contact throughout the day with Muslims who possess enough time apart from their work to participate in the community activities. It is, therefore, essential to evaluate the different types of lifestyles mentioned in the previous section within the context of this framework of the mosque.

As previously mentioned, there are basically two types of lifestyles in the present time. The first is where the Muslims work and live in the same place which occurs mainly in villages and some modern cities. The second type is where the Muslims work and live in a separate environment which is found in most cities of the world. It can, therefore, be seen that the eternal idea of the mosque can only be fully achieved in the first type of lifestyle whereas the second type calls for a different kind of mosque idea. It is suggested that the modern Sunnī lifestyle requires the existence of two types of mosques which this thesis designates as the 'Muṣallā Centre' and the 'Islamic Centre'. Before describing the general architectural programmes of these two centres it is deemed useful to contrast these two mosque centres with the present mosque designation of *masḍjid* and *djami*'.

As discussed in the first chapter, the only main distinction between a *masḍjid* and a *djami*' is that the latter possess a government's authority to conduct the Friday Prayers. As this distinction only came with the rule of the caliphs after the demise of the Prophet it can be suggested that their main aim was as a political control over the masses. Creswell has documented the concern of the Egyptian governor Ziyad Ibn Abihi in the early history of Islam about the influence of the tribal mosque over his political province and his action was to build a greater mosque to rival these influences. The *djami*' serves as the main information centre of the Muslim people. The distinction may also have been caused by administrative convenience to designate small community mosques as opposed to those constructed by the central authority.

Since Imām Syaukani stipulated that there was no sanctified difference between a *masdjid* and a *djami'* on the basis of the Friday Prayers, there is no need to continue this classification in the present time. If, as described in the previous paragraph, the main factor of the existence of the *djami'* was as a political control and information distributor it cannot rival the massive influence of the modern mass media in the present time. Muslims no longer have to flock to the mosque to listen to the news about other places and peoples. In the present age, if politicians know how to utilise the mass media to their advantage they have assured themselves that their ideas have reached the people. It can, therefore, be assumed that the *djami'* and *masdjid* distinction is a product of a past lifestyle and that its usefulness and necessity are highly questionable in today's society.

The thesis has suggested the new distinction of Muşallā Centre and Islamic Centre solely on the basis of the present lifestyle of the Muslims that would hopefully be more useful and convenient to the general Muslim society. The new distinction recognises the working and living conditions of the Muslim society within a technologically advanced age. The following sections describe the general architectural programmes of the two types of mosques.

8.3.1 The Muşallā Centre Programme

The Muşallā Centre is suggested because of the presence of huge concentration of people in a particular place part of the time in a day. This type of mosque suits the situation of places such as cities with the majority of inhabitants who spend less than 10 hours in the day from the morning till late afternoon. The Muslims are in the cities through the Zuhr and 'Aşr Prayer time periods. There are those that return to the cities at night purely for entertainment but this number is usually small and increases only during the weekends. Most Muslim working couples usually stay at home after a long day at work to be with their children and families.

As its name implies, the Muşallā Centre's main purpose is to prepare a convenient place for the performance of *ṣalāt*. Since the Muslims are at their work places through the two *ṣalāt* periods, the Muşallā Centre should be provided with the spaces necessary for the performance of the two daily prayers and the Friday Prayers. The

facilities for Friday Prayers is necessary only in countries where Friday is not an official holiday. Since Islam possesses no 'Sabbath' day idea, some Muslim countries opt to either have it as a holiday to honour Islam whilst others find that this would create unnecessary inconvenience to international trade and settle on the Western established weekend holidays.

Aside from the programme of prayers, there is nothing much that the Muṣallā Centre can achieve in fulfilling the eternal idea of the mosque. This is because there is inadequate time for the working Muslims to spend in participating in the mosque activities. The idea of strengthening the Muslim brotherhood between Muslims is difficult to be achieved in this situation where workers may transfer to other locations and people frequenting the commercial and entertainment complexes change and inhabit these places in short duration. The eternal idea of the mosque can only be achieved if the Muslims' employers are willing to allocate some part of the working hours towards the education of Muslims and the strengthening of unity and brotherhood among them.

The Muṣallā Centre, however, can be provided with conducive facilities and spaces for Muslims to meet. It can be provided with many functions such as places to eat and meet while relaxing in a serene atmosphere before commencing the *ṣalāt*. It can also be provided with some reading and audio-video facilities for the Muslim to converge for news and interact among themselves. Some recreational spaces for light games may also be useful to the Muslims in easing their work stress while waiting for prayers. Another important programme would be the organisation of special exhibitions about Islam and about the fate and life of Muslims around the world. Short talks in the form of reminders about the Sunna and the teachings of the *Ḳur'ān* can also be held a few minutes before the commencement of prayers.

The Muṣallā Centre can also be provided with facilities for seminars and formal gatherings concerning Muslims and Islam. The facilities should also include some means of offering information about Islam to those who require it. The Muṣallā Centres can also contain temporary accommodations for travelers and those in need but it is not necessarily required since it cannot be hoped that the centre be open 24 hours in a day.

The Muṣallā Centre has the potential of becoming an important gathering place for the Muslims during their lunch breaks and just before they go home in the evenings. In this way the Muslims in their working environments would be able to use their short breaks in an Islamic atmosphere and utilise their time fully towards developing some ties of friendship, education and concern for other less fortunate Muslims.

8.3.2 The Islamic Centre Programme

The mosque as an Islamic Centre is more suited for the lifestyle of traditional Muslims and those residing in the modern housing estates. Although it was mentioned that the modern housing estates comprise of dwellers who inhabit the towns and cities almost half of the day and spend the weekend and the other half of the weekdays at home, the settlement can still be considered as a viable and 'living' one. This is mainly because the new modern estates which have been around for a few decades contain house owners who have retired and form the elderly class of society. Some of the children of these elderly house owners will opt to live and work near their parents to take care of them as required in Islam. The housing estates also contain the womenfolk who have opted to become housewives when the family grows in size and when it is no longer economical to hire servants or to send them to another family to be cared for.

The mosque in these types of societies can perform its full potential as the place to develop the community in all aspects of Islam. The Islamic Centre as the mosque in these communities must perform the task of being the catalyst and medium for social organisation and interaction such that the Muslim individuals can discharge their social obligations and thus help create a more conducive environment for their faith to grow individually and collectively. These then are the main goals of the mosque institutions in the two types of communities.

With these goals in mind the mosque institution must fulfill two fundamental objectives. It must firstly provide the necessary programmes and facilities to develop the Muslim community in such a manner that the members are able to act individually and collectively towards building a truly Islamic social and physical environment.

Secondly, it must encourage and provide opportunities for the Muslims to develop social unity and strengthen their feelings of brotherhood.

The above mentioned objectives can be achieved through the organisation and implementation of a variety of educational, social, welfare, economic and ritualistic programmes.

8.3.2.1 The Educational Programme

The most important function of the Islamic Centre is to educate the community where Muslims reside about many aspects of Islam. Since the *Qur'ān* mentions that faith may increase through actions and activities that can be regarded as *'ibādāt*, the Muslim must strive to understand what are the nature of these actions. These actions include the knowledge about its practice and probable rationale in order to encourage them to perform it. Thus the Muslim's education literally begins from the cradle where the *adhān* is pronounced a few seconds after birth till the advice in reciting the *shahāda* upon the throes of death.

The Islamic Centres' committee must provide a variety of educational curriculum for the various types of students. The students include children, teenagers and adult Muslims and the non-Muslims.

Preschool children until their coming of age must be taught the basic skills of reciting the *Qur'ān*, an early introduction to the rituals of prayers, ablution, fasting; some basic Islamic manners in daily life such as the proper way to eat, greet and manners towards the parents and their elders; some knowledge about the basic principles of Islam; and some knowledge about the early history of Islam. The level of understanding must be balanced with the government school curriculum if the children were in a Muslim country. The most important emphasis at the mosque will be their practice of the rituals and behaviors in the Islamic Centre.

Part of the teenagers curriculum should comprise of the continuation of their first stage of education as children into a more in-depth understanding of the Islamic way of life. At this stage they must be taught some of the social responsibilities of leadership and organisation in order to prepare themselves for adulthood and into the world of family life through marriage and rearing children. This is also a good stage to encourage the learning of self defense and some fundamental

rules of combat in order to ensure their preparedness in defending the faith, family, home and country. The teenagers must also now be introduced to many of the social issues and problems in their country and in others in order to avoid them from the trappings of such vices as drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution and petty crimes. This is also the age where the proper code of interaction with the opposite sex is taught. The Islamic Centres' committee can also organise programmes towards developing manual and intellectual skills for the teenagers to earn their livelihood. This programme is only instituted as a support to the centralised institutions of learning and skill development.

The Muslim adults have different needs in relation to education by virtue of their age and important responsibility in the community as heads of each family. There are several different curriculum that must be designed for the Muslim adult. The first type of curriculum consists of the intellectual development in terms of knowledge about the various aspects of rituals and principles in Islam. The second type of education is in the methods and technics of organisation and management toward preparing the Muslims for the position of leadership in the community, committees and family. Since Islam has no priesthood, the burden of developing and propagating Islam lies in the hands of each Muslim adult. In one sense, there are no priests in Islam but in another, every responsible Muslim is a 'priest' to his family, relatives, friends and those under his leadership in whatever circumstances the Muslim finds himself or herself in. The third type of curriculum comprises of the basic knowledge of the modern sciences, economics, and politics which govern both the local and international scene in the world. These two latter types have been totally ignored by most mosque institutions with the devastating result of the inability of the Muslim to react adequately with the changing world affairs and technology. Failure to prepare the Muslims in this aspect will jeopardise the application of the Islamic way of life within these changes and advances.

Finally, the Islamic Centres' committee should design a specific programme for the purpose of providing information to non-Muslims. Islam requires that Muslims present these information in the best possible manner without any attempts of forceful conversion. The

task of the Prophet and the Muslims after him has been the presentation of Islam in the best possible method available.

Before ending the description of the educational programme of the Islamic Centre, a word must be mentioned concerning the method of teaching and instruction. The Muslims in the past and in the present time have always used and are still using the age old method of lecturing in a circle of audience in the mosque. Although there are many merits in preserving this tradition, this method must be questioned in the light of the existence of many effective methods of instructions using the best communication technology and media the modern age can offer. The present lecture method in the manner of one sided presentation without active interaction of the participants may have been useful and crucial at one time when there had existed very few printed literature and the instructors felt that it was their sole duty to transfer directly all of what they had learnt from their teachers who had also used a similar method. This method of oral transmission may have saved the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth* from gross misrepresentation and interpretation but it is no longer useful or beneficial to teach in this manner. In the age of the printed word, and in the age of expanding fields of inquiries in which it is difficult for a single person to master every kind of knowledge, a more active and effective method of teaching must be sought.

8.3.2.2 The Social Programme

The most important objective of the social programme is to foster and strengthen the unity and feeling of brotherhood among the Muslims in a community. This objective can be achieved through the organisation of various formal and informal activities. The formal activities may include those that are directly related to the rituals of the religion and those that can generate social interaction.

The Islamic Centre committee should organise the celebrations of formal ritualistic practices such as the '*aḳīka* and the circumcision ceremonies, the marriage and the 'Id celebrations, the *ḳurbān* event and the breaking of fast in *Ramadhān*. The '*aḳīka* ceremony is the occasion where the Muslim parent is recommended, when they are able, to sacrifice a lamb on the occasion of the birth of a child in the family. The ritual is a form of gratitude to Allāh The Most

Beneficent for His sacred gift of life. Although the present practice of sacrificing occurs elsewhere than in the mosque and the meat is distributed to the needy and the neighbours, it is best if the meat can be cooked and a feast can be held at the Islamic Centres for the community and the poor who reside there.

The circumcision ceremony takes place to signify the coming of age of the Muslim male child into a responsible young adult. After the circumcision, the child is looked upon by society as responsible Muslims and is expected to fulfill most of the responsibilities and obligations of the religion. Although most Arab Muslims circumcised their sons upon birth, Muslims in other countries prefer to circumcise their sons who have shown some physical and mental signs of adulthood which is usually at the age of 12. This ceremony was once celebrated by the whole society with feasts and communal supplications but the modern Muslim parent nowadays merely send their children to the hospital where they are circumcised individually. It would be in the best interest of the society that this important occasion be announced and celebrated at the Islamic Centres so that the children can feel their acceptance into adulthood.

Most mosque committees nowadays make a great effort to prepare food for the breaking of fast to the Muslims. Although these feasts are financed solely from the mosque's funds, they are aided by the generous donations of Muslims who are anxious to fulfill the Prophet's Sunna in the *ḥadīth* which stipulates that the person providing food for the fasting Muslims would be rewarded by Allāh with the equivalent rewards of those who had attended the feast. This is a most important occasion for the Muslims to congregate at the mosque and participate in the activities in the holy month of *Ramadhān*.

There are two 'Id celebrations which are celebrated annually. The Prophet had encouraged all the members of the community, including women in their menstrual periods, to participate in the celebration. The 'Id al-Fiṭr is celebrated at the end of the fasting month and the activities on that day includes merry making, feasting and a declaration of love and brotherhood with all the members of the society. The 'Id al-Aṭḥā is a celebration of the the pilgrimage to Makka and the practice of animal sacrifice to honour the important event of the prophet Ibrāhīm's (peace be upon him) great test. Although it is not

required that the animals be sacrificed at the mosque, there is no harm in the practice and in some instances it is encouraged as the Muslim young and old can witness this solemn event. It is also recommended that the sacrificial meat be cooked and distributed to the needy and the community in the mosque rather than dividing it to the neighbours.

Aside from these special occasions related to a religious ritual the Islamic Centres committee should also organise any event or celebration that would encourage the people to gather at the mosque and to interact more closely. These formal and informal activities are important in keeping the mosque or the Islamic Centre filled with people at all times so that its doors, once opened, would never close to any strangers who happen to visit it.

8.3.2.3 The Economic Programme

The Islamic Centre's committee must ensure that the mosque has adequate funds to run its numerous programmes and also create a situation where the mosque is financially independent from a single economic contributor. The Centre's independence in this context is important to ensure that it performs its function not only as a medium to develop the community but also as the guardian of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna* in relation to the central political structure of a Muslim country.

Although the Islamic Centre can replenish its funds through the collection of the mandatory *zakāt* and the *ṣadaqa* or donations from its members, there is a strong need to manage the financial resources into a more stable situation. The committee should encourage the practice of endowment among the rich such that it can possess land or property that may generate the financial funds for its activities. At the present time the practice of 'selling' the idea of the *wakaf* to the Muslim public has not taken place effectively. There are many Muslims who are able to contribute endowments who do not understand the religious implications of this idea. The mosque has grown weak in every sense of cultural development partly because the rich no longer support it through the *wakafs* of property, funds and lands. If the Muslim public can be taught effectively as to the great rewards and merits of this act, they would not hesitate to financially support the mosque in such form as providing stipends to teachers, funds for education and research programmes, publications and others.

Aside from the *wakaf*, the committee should attempt to provide viable commercial activities and facilities at the mosque in order to generate more income. The committee can either manage the business or rent out the facilities while requiring that no transaction should take place during the prayer times and that the goods and methods of retail should abide strictly by the Islamic code. The Islamic Centre can also provide services in the form of skill developments and aids to children and teenagers in school works. In this way the Centre may not only assure itself of a stable financial condition, it also ensures the continuous presence of people to meet and interact in an Islamic atmosphere.

8.3.2.4 The Welfare Programme

The main objective of this programme is to provide some basic needs to the needy and the traveler. It is also meant to provide an opportunity for the Muslim public to come in contact and to help directly those who are in need.

One of the first important activities is to set aside a space for the accommodation of the homeless and the traveller. The mosque committee should organise the work toward preparing food and some physical comfort for these guests. Since the Islamic Centre was suggested as the venue for the collection of *zakāt*, *ṣadaqa* and other funds, it is natural that it sets up an administrative mechanism to distribute the goods donated to those in need. It can also arrange for the Muslim who are too weak or unable to fast in *Ramadhān* for those who had perform sexual intercourse during fasting to expiate for their weakness and sin in the manner of providing food for the poor. Aside from these activities the committee can also organise a health clinic by volunteer medical personnel to cater to the physical health and conditions of the Muslim public and for the poor.

8.2.2.5 The Judicial Programme

The main aim of this programme is to provide a consultative facility and to mediate local and family disputes related to the social and family life of the Muslims. It is important to provide this facility for two reasons. The first is that it encourages and facilitates the education of the Muslim in this formal and complex aspect of the religion. Secondly, it strengthens the idea of Islam's integrative nature

with all aspect of the Muslim life. Thirdly, it helps to ease both the society's burden and the work load of the Sharī'a courts by settling and mediating disputes in its local context. Finally it creates an effective situation for the judge to gather background information on the cases since the community is responsible to provide character witnesses and other relevant information to the particular cases.

The committee should organise the times of the consultation and also the judicial proceedings such that it would be accessible to the public. Cases requiring discretion and of a highly personal affair may be held in the privacy of a small enclosed area. The idea is that the Muslim community can fully participate in this proceedings such as the learning process can take place and that their social obligations as witnesses can be discharged.

8.4 The Architectural Design Guideline

The following description of the architectural guideline of the mosque is derived solely from the programmes mentioned above. The section suggests guidelines of mosque design related to its size, site, types of spaces, relationship between the spaces, the relevance of mosque furnitures, the design of some common architectural elements of the mosque and its architectural language or expression. The section describes both the suggested guideline for the Muṣallā and the Islamic Centres.

8.4.1 Size

There is no specific guideline that is agreed upon by the religious scholars as to the ideal size of the mosque. In architecture there are two fundamental factors controlling the determination of size. The first factor is related to occupancy while the second concerns the aesthetic or symbolic intention of the building. If the question of size is related to the aesthetic intention of symbolising an object, it is relative to the economic constraint and the visual impact of the building in its surrounding context. The world is filled with such grandiose schemes by monarchs, caliphs and governments in this respect. With the advancement of long span structures, today's mosque can fill tens of thousands of Muslim. This is basically a result of several factors. Firstly,

there is no set condition for the ideal size of the mosque. Secondly, since the mosque is more regarded as a house of God and the place of prayer, the clients and designers feel justified in creating the grandiose scale of the building because to them it is almost literally a house of God. Thirdly, the impact of sheer size is crucial in creating a visual symbol.

In the context of smaller communities, religious scholars have been wrestling with the definition of the *qariah*. The *qariah* constitutes a single neighborhood area. There is no definitive criterion for this concept and the religious scholars have suggested a few conditions from their own personal judgements without strong support from the *Al-Ḥadīth* and the *Qur'ān*. There is a suggestion of the radius of the human voice in calling the people to prayer. There is also the suggestion of a limit of 40 houses by those of the *Shāfi'ī* school of thought. In the present Malaysian system the number of 1000 worshippers is quoted from the considerations of the size of the modern housing estates. In the villages, the criterion is rather obscure and usually is left up to the discretion of religious scholars in the government department of religious affairs..

The thesis suggests that the present criterion of mosque size has been based entirely on the notion of the house of God and that its main concern was that of prayer. Since the thesis suggests that the eternal idea of the mosque is to provide the opportunity for the Muslims to organise and develop their community it follows that the consideration of size must take into account the ideal and manageable size toward this aim. One of the main functions of the mosque is that of education and also to unite the Muslim in a strong brotherhood tie. In this respect the question that must be raised is what should the ideal size be for a leader and the administrative committee to manage the activities toward these ends. It is important to question whether the building of huge mosques for tens of thousands worshippers is appropriate. The question of the density of a modern housing complex with the ease of modern transportation must also be considered under these objectives.

The thesis cannot answer this question of the *qariah* because of the complex social factors involved. However, the thesis suggests that it is better to build smaller Islamic Centres in the Muslim settlements such that the community can be easier to educate, organised and encourage in intimate social interactions. For the *Muṣallā* Centres, the

thesis proposes that the idea of size is not as crucial as that of the Islamic Centre. This is because the users are temporary occupants in the cities and their rate of changing professions and activities are extremely high. Furthermore the users lack the necessary time to participate in the informal and formal social activities for any kind of educational and social mechanism to be effective.

8.4.2 Siting

At the present time there seem to be a variety of criteria for the choice of sites to build mosques. Most of the mosques which were built for a symbolic purpose are usually sited on island sites, on a hill and isolated from the urban fabric. The choice seems to be based solely on the full visual impact of the building. Mosques have also been known to be built on such 'romantic' sites as in the middle of a lake with a bridge connecting it to the village it serves. Other less noted mosques in the cities have been built on the least expensive parcels of land usually at the city's edge. Only the village or the housing estate's mosque find itself in the centre of the community. However, the weakness inherent in this scheme is that the mosque is generally located near a playing field and secluded from the commercial part of the place.

The thesis proposes that the mosque should be sited where people are most found. It should not necessarily be on the ground but can be sited on several floors of a multi-functional high rise block. It can also be placed where the busiest commercial and mixed use complex are built. Isolated urban sites should not necessarily be chosen and where possible the mosque should be integrated into the urban fabric of the cities. The Muşallā Centres should be located in such places mentioned where there is less than a full day occupancy in these complexes. If these places contain residences, Islamic Centres should be built. Islamic Centres should also be located where there is an institutional complex where a great number of people live and work at the same place or within the same area.. Where possible the Islamic Centres of villages and settlements should be sited such that schools, villages, the commercial activities and the main road of the places meet to ensure easy access to people in all their activities and to the travelers visiting the particular location.

8.4.3 The Types of Spaces in the Mosque

There are basically four types of spaces required in the mosque to fulfil the requirements of the programmes mentioned previously. The spaces described are mainly for the Islamic Centre unless otherwise stated. The four types of spaces can be classified as the prohibited, the multi-purpose, the specific and the outside space. The following sub-section describes the general function of these types of spaces.

8.4.3.1 The Prohibited Space

The prohibited space can be defined as that area of a building which has been 'intended' by the builders and patrons to be constituted as the actual 'mosque'. This space was described previously as that sanctified area where the prohibition of the presence of menstruating women and Muslims in a state of major defilement are disallowed to visit or stay for a long time. It is also the place signified to be where the performance of the *Taḥiyyah al-Masdjid* and the *i'tikāf* ritual can take place. As stated in the previous chapters, these prohibitions and special requirements are controversial issues even among the *Sunnī* religious scholars. Thus the prohibited space is necessary only for those who hold strongly this view while it is unnecessary for those who do not consider it a major affair.

The prohibited space is usually the space where the *miḥrāb* and the *minbar* is. There is nothing particularly sacred about the *minbar* or the *miḥrāb* in Islam despite some of the suggestions offered by scholars in architecture keen on reinforcing the sanctity of these two elements. Since the *miḥrāb* was never the invention of the Prophet and was admitted to be a later invention by most scholars, the only acceptable function it is useful for is as a directional indicator to the *qibla*. The fact that some scholars have argued for a greater sanctity in terms of the *miḥrāb* as a symbol of the Prophet's presence or a mystical door to heaven cannot be taken seriously within the *Sunnī* framework of Islam which bases its stand solely on the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet's tradition. It is the same with the *minbar* where there are numerous interpretations as to its sacred nature due to its use as the official throne of the caliph and the authoritative seat of the Prophet. Since the *ḥadīths* merely points to its use to elevate the Prophet in his teaching so as those in the back of the

audience can hear, there is very little evidence to indicate its sacred character.¹ It is a highly questionable act for certain religious scholars to emphasise the *minbar* solely to be used as the place where the Friday sermon can be delivered. If the *minbar* is merely an acoustical device, its presence is rivalled by the audio system of the modern age. Its presence is necessary only as a continuity of tradition because the Prophet had used it and because part of the Friday Sermon requires the speaker to sit for a few seconds in between the sermon as the Prophet had done fourteen centuries ago. Attempts to design these two elements to emphasise their sanctity as sacred elements may lead to an imbalance of sanctity in the mosque which may result in its use as merely for ritual purposes.

The size of the prohibited space cannot be determined from any religious source. The prohibited space can be used for any activity aside from prayer with the exception of those activities involving the presence of Muslims in a state of major defilement. If the space is too large, it will impede many community activities but if it is too small, it would impose difficulty on the supererogatory act of *Taḥiyyah al-Masḍjid* Prayer and the person in *i'tikāf*. It should not be a major problem since the two rituals are merely supererogatory with little merits compared to many other activities in the whole building.

The *miḥrāb* and the *minbar* space should also be designed with the capacity for incorporating the use of modern audio-visual technology. There are religious scholars who oppose the use of visual aid equipment in sermons simply because it was never practised by the Prophet. These same people somehow neglect to criticise the common use of the audio facilities. Their view is that the *minbar* is a sacred place

¹ Narrated Abū Ḥāzim bin Dīnār some people went to Sahl bin Sa'd As-Sa'idī and told him that they had different opinions regarding the wood of the pulpit. They asked him about it and he said, "By Allāh, I know of what wood the pulpit was made, and no doubt I saw it on the very first day when Allāh's apostle took his seat on it. Allāh's Apostle sent for such and such an Anṣarī woman (and Sahl mentioned her name) and said to her, 'Order your slave-carpenter to prepare for me some pieces of wood (i.e. pulpit) on which I may sit at the time of addressing the people.' So she ordered her slave-carpenter and he made it from the tamarisk of the forest and brought it (to the woman). The woman sent that (pulpit) to Allāh's Apostle who ordered it to be placed here. Then I saw Allah's Apostle praying on it and then bowed on it. Then he stepped back, got down and prostrated on the ground near the foot of the pulpit. After finishing the prayer he faced the people and said, 'I have done this so that you may follow me and learn the way I pray.'"

for delivering the sermon and thus one must literally adhere to the Prophet's Sunna. It was explained that the *minbar* is not merely a place to deliver the sermon but a facility for use in communicating with an audience. Speeches, lectures and sermons fall into this category of communication which can be made more effective with the modern audio-visual aid.

8.4.3.2 The Multi-functional Space

The prohibited space should be integrated with the multi-functional space in the mosque complex. The multi-functional space is the most important space because most of the mosque activities are centred in it. The space must be designed so that many activities can be performed and many events can be held. The space should not be designed with any fixed furnitures but should be close to storage facilities where furnitures used in the activities can be easily stored or moved when the congregational prayer is performed.

8.4.3.3 The Single-function Spaces

There are many essential spaces that have specific functions and requires fixed types of furnitures and fittings.

One of the most important single function spaces is an enclosed one for women. It is important to be fully aware of the conditions of women in the mosque in justifying this claim. There are five conditions with regards to women, prayer and the mosque. Firstly, women are not as strongly recommended in Islam as men are in the responsibility of performing the congregational prayers at the mosque. It is not obligatory for them to perform the Friday Prayers or to attend the daily congregational ones. Secondly, when they are present in the mosque for prayers, they must be grouped with their own kind and not to mix with the male worshippers. Thirdly, during prayers, they must be positioned so that the men in prayers have no visual access to them until they leave when the prayer is over. Fourthly, the women in congregational prayers must be able to see either the *imām* or the male congregation so that they may synchronise the rites of prayers with the rest of the congregation. Finally, in performing the rites of ablution before prayers, the women must remove their veil and put them on again during prayers. From the consideration of the first four conditions of

women in prayers, there is no concrete justification for a special enclosed space to be allocated in the mosque. What is usually done in most mosques is the construction of a curtain in the back part of the prayer space. This method is inefficient to accommodate women who have to remove their veils to perform the ablution rites. It is only in the consideration of the fifth condition which necessitate the existence of a specially enclosed space for women with their own ablution rooms totally separate from any male circulation passages. The private space for women would also accommodate them by their being able to remove their veils and head covers to socialise amongst themselves.

Since one of the main functions of the mosque is education, a complete resource centre should be established. The room should be a small library with the modern conveniences of extracting information such as the use of computers, slide projectors, audio-video facilities, books, newspapers and periodicals. It should not be a space filled only with the *Qur'ān* or any other religious works. It should emphasise the appeal and needs of the popular audience rather than the academic researcher. It should also be quipped with printing facilities for the purposes of producing printed literature for newsletters, flyers and brochures to cater for the communal needs and as information source to the non-Muslim.

The ablution place is usually grouped together with the toilet facility. It should also contain adequate space and facility for bathing the dead. The ablution facility that are usually used are the tap and pool facility. Designers should ensure a method of conserving the use of water in the ablution ritual and also a beneficial system of utilising the waste water from the ablution such as in the form of watering the mosque gardens and orchards. Whenever the pool method is used care must be taken against possible accidents with children.

The kitchen can be considered as an important space in the mosque for it is here that most of the food preparation for the many social functions and celebrations are prepared. It is also a public facility for the needy in the preparation for their daily sustenance. The kitchen should also be equipped with a generous storage space to keep the tents, furniture, pots and crockery that is rented out for feasts or used by the mosque in its activities.

A private meeting space is also needed such that private meetings of administrative staff and judicial proceedings of sensitive cases can take place. The meeting room is usually grouped together with the office space for clerical functions and the office of the *imām* and his aids. The *imām*'s office can also act as his personal changing room or preparation space before a formal meeting or before leading the congregational prayer.

A lounge area with modern furnitures equipped with modern recreational conveniences such as the television, video and cassette players and with some indoor game furnitures goes a long way in attracting the young and the old to the mosque. It is one of the best places for social interaction in a relaxed atmosphere.

A separate room for the teaching of children and as a nursery is recommended. The room can double as a tutorial place to help the older children in their school examinations. The assorted facilities related to the school must also be considered such as the teacher's room and the storage space for the school equipment.

The inclusion of shops and cafeterias are strongly recommended not only because they provide fixed incomes for the mosque but also as places to generate the public's frequent visits. The shops and cafeterias must certainly be instructed to sell only those items that are not forbidden by the Islamic moral code. The *imām* of the Malaysian National mosque has suggested that the mosque be equipped with postal and banking services. He has also suggested the presence of bus and train ticket booths to cater for the basic travel needs of the Muslims and others. The whole philosophy of having the commercial activity is not only as an income generator but also as a service provider and an effective method of populating the mosque 24 hours in a day.

It is also recommended that the Islamic Centre be provided with some kind of workshop facility to not only aid in the training of working skills to the teenagers but also as a place where they can expand their energy in a fruitful hobby. It is recognised everywhere that most of the social problems of drug and alcohol abuse are mainly due to the teenagers' sheer boredom in their after school activities. The presence of the workshop may attract the teenagers to the mosque and they can then be encouraged to learn about their Islamic responsibilities and

participate in the communal activities organised by the mosque committees.

A specific place for the shelter of the traveller and the homeless is needed although the multi-functional space can also function for this purpose. It is better to separate both of the functions since the multi-functional space houses many activities and functions. The shelter should be designed to ensure some kind of basic privacy for the users.

8.4.3.4 The Outside Spaces

The present design of mosque compound is usually that of a serene sculpture garden and parking facilities. There is little attempt to utilise the spaces for other functions and to attract the public to the mosque.

Paved courts for light sports can be constructed which can function also as an outdoor space for celebration. This outside court can be used for physical exercises or the training in self defense. It should be mentioned that the training of self defense, before becoming a recreational interest was part of the education of the young in many traditional societies. In the Malay traditional society the art of 'Silat' is taught to teenagers as part of their adult education. The training of this martial arts incorporates many mystical aspect of the Islamic religion as part of character building and discipline. It is highly recommended that their training be performed at the Islamic Centres as this will increase the sense of the primary purpose of fighting which is toward preserving and protecting an accepted way of life for the sake of Allāh The Most High. Finally the games court can also be used as a praying space.

Children play spaces are strongly recommended since they would attract parents to take their children to the mosque and thus encourage social interaction. It is also important that the children be made to grow around the spirit of the mosque so that the communal responsibilities can be exposed to them and also they would be able to learn indirectly from the various rituals and events at the mosque.

The outside space can also contain outdoor furnitures and equipment's to create a garden environment for encouraging the Muslim to past their leisure time at the mosque. Certain parts of the outside area of the mosque can be used as a public fruit and vegetable orchard. With the limited land on individual house lots, it is possible to encourage

community activities by allocating lands to be worked on at leisure by the community. Muslims who are interested in such endeavour can both benefit from the products and also receive the blessings from the fruits and vegetables eaten by people and animals. Lastly, an area must be allocated in relation more to the kitchen and the events of the *aḳiḳa* and the *ḳurbān*. This is the place where the animals are slaughtered and thus a small pen is all that is required.

All of the spaces described above are meant for the Islamic Centres. The Muṣallā Centres that are not occupied 24 hours a day can obviously perform without some of the spaces above. It is not essential that the Muṣallā Centres possess a kitchen or a shelter for the homeless and the traveller since it cannot be expected to be opened through out the day and night when the high rise or the commercial complex are closed. Muṣallā Centres in cities are seldom able to possess outside spaces. The educational facilities mentioned above are also not essential for the Muṣallā Centre.

8.4.4 The Relationship Between the Spaces in the Mosque

The mosque in Islam contains no mystical or symbolic requirement for the arrangement of the spaces other than the fact that the space related to prayer must be oriented towards the *ḳibla* while those having to do with the toilet function should face away from it. Attempts by such individuals in deriving a set of specific layout planning principle such as that suggested by El-Gohary or Gabr is an attempt based on producing the best place for prayer and meditation. The thesis emphasises that the designer is free to work out any design layout that may best achieve the programme and attract people to the mosque. The following description of architectural design lay out is but a suggestion that must be carefully evaluated within the mosque's specific cultural context in particular places.

The most important relationship between the spaces in the mosque is of the prohibited and the multi-function space. The prohibited space should be situated at the *ḳibla* end of the multi-function space. The prohibited space can be considered to be part of the multi-function space. The designer should differentiate the two spaces subtly and is not recommended to emphasise the space into something similar to

the 'holy of holies' space in church design. A raised or depressed platform is not recommended because this would differentiate the prayer *saffs*. A suggestion of enclosure with a colonnade or an arcade can be used but the solution may impede the visual contact between the audience and a lecturer but this can be considered as a minor weakness. One of the best solutions may lie in the colour treatment of walls or floors. It is up to the architect to create this subtle difference of the two spaces while permitting the multi-functional nature of the whole space inclusive of the prohibited one.

Next in importance is the relationship between the outside space and the school with the multi-function space. It is important that the outside space and the school be placed either flanking the multi-function space or in front of it. This strategy serves two important purposes. Firstly they act as overflow space in such activities as prayers, mass lectures and celebrations. From the point of view of prayer it is important that the designer maintains a visual link between the congregation outside the multi-function space and the ones inside such that the performance of prayer in unison is uninterrupted. It is, therefore, essential for the designer to construct either columns or places for columns in order to build temporary shelters for this purpose. Secondly, the spaces provides the future expansion area for the mosque. This aspect of mosque design is important. Mosques, when possible, should not be designed as a complete building without the expectations of expansion. Since the mosque grows with the community, it is necessary to anticipate the future requirements of space and functions.

The toilets in the ablution space should be designed with their axis perpendicular to the *qibla* such that one is not either facing toward or placing the *qibla* behind oneself during answering the call of nature. This is the requirement which the Prophet had stipulated when one is in an open space. It is permissible to face the *qibla* or place the *qibla* at one's back if there is a wall between the individual and the *qibla*.² Since most modern toilets have walls, this requirement is

² Narrated Abū Aiyūb Al-Anṣārī: Allāh's āpostle said, If anyone of you goes to an open space for answering the call of nature he should neither face nor turn his back towards the Qibla; he should face either the east or the west."

Bukhārī's explanation of the chapter is as follows:

followed purely out of respect for the religion and if the designer finds it difficult to meet this condition he or she may choose to ignore it.

The women space should be placed and designed such that they have an unobstructed view towards the *imām* leading the prayer without being visible to the male congregation. The best solution seems to be by placing the women space at a level higher than where the men pray. The space can be fitted with a screen that ensures the women of a comfortable visual access to the movements of the male congregation in prayers while being almost invisible to the male congregation due to the floor height and the screen. This does not necessarily mean that the women space cannot be placed on the same level as that of the men. In this situation the screen to the women space is ineffective. The screen must be equipped with a dark curtain that can be drawn to cover the whole screen area when the women seek some privacy. The curtain is drawn open when all the women has fully covered themselves for prayers and when most of the male congregants face the *imām* in prayer. The women space should also be designed with their own ablution space so that when they enter the women space they can safely remove their veil and perform their ablution with ease.

Entrances to mosques can be at all sides of the building with the exception of the *kibla* wall to avoid distracting the Muslim in prayer. Entrances must be equipped with adequate space for the Muslim to remove their shoes and coats. Although this may seem to be a small and trivial point, most designers fail to take this mundane aspect seriously which results in inconvenience to the congregation. In tropical countries where Muslims usually wear slippers to mosque and requires no overcoats, the problem is not as crucial since the mosque is usually open on three sides. The problem is felt mostly in mosque design where the climate is cold and the congregation come to the mosque dressed in

'While urinating or defeacating, never face the Qibla except when you are screened by a building or a wall or something like that.'

Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 146, p. 106

This explanation is reinforced by the following *ḥadīth*:

Narrated Anas Ibn Mālik: Whenever the Prophet went for answering the call of nature, I and another boy used to go after him with a staff, a stick or an "Anza(spear) and a tumbler of water.

Ibid., *ḥadīth* no. 479, p.286

their overcoats with shoes or boots. Many designers fail to provide ample space for the mass of people leaving the mosque during the Friday Prayers and the 'Id Prayers for them to put on their shoes and overcoats. This creates a pedestrian congestion which wastes the time of the congregation who have matters to attend to. It also encourages unnecessary tension within the congregation as bodies are pushed and shoes are stepped on. In a place such as the mosque where fostering unity among the worshippers is of utmost importance, the entrance space must be carefully designed.

The rest of the spaces can be designed in whatever relationship that the designer feel best suited for the mosque in their own locality or in response to the site context of the place. The important thing to remember is that they must be placed where it is convenient for the Muslim and the non-Muslim to visit. These are the spaces where the level of security towards the inside of the multi-function space is not as crucial. For instance, the kitchen and space for shelter may be placed adjacent to each other for ease of serving the needy. The offices, cafeteria, shop, resource centre and lounge spaces may be grouped together and can serve as a front to the mosque. The design of the spaces may suggest a visual link to the life in the multi-function space but it must be in a manner such that only those who are interested to learn about Islam may approach the inner part of the mosque. Although the mosque is a public place for Muslims and non-Muslims, the whole complex must be designed with preserving security when it is required since it is the place where Muslims congregate. Lack of security in many mosques have shown the devastating toll of life when the mosque is involved in racial or political violence. The relationship between the spaces in both types of Centres can be observed in Figures 16 and 17.

8.4.5 The Quality of Light in the Mosque

Much has been written about the quality of light in the mosque. Scholars in architectural history have commonly commented on two aspects of the quality of light in mosques. The most common comments made with regards to this aspect of mosque design is the various methods which designers were trying to 'simulate' the lighting effect suggested by the Qur'ānic Verses of light. This romantic interpretation suggests that the domes and the *mihrāb* were designed

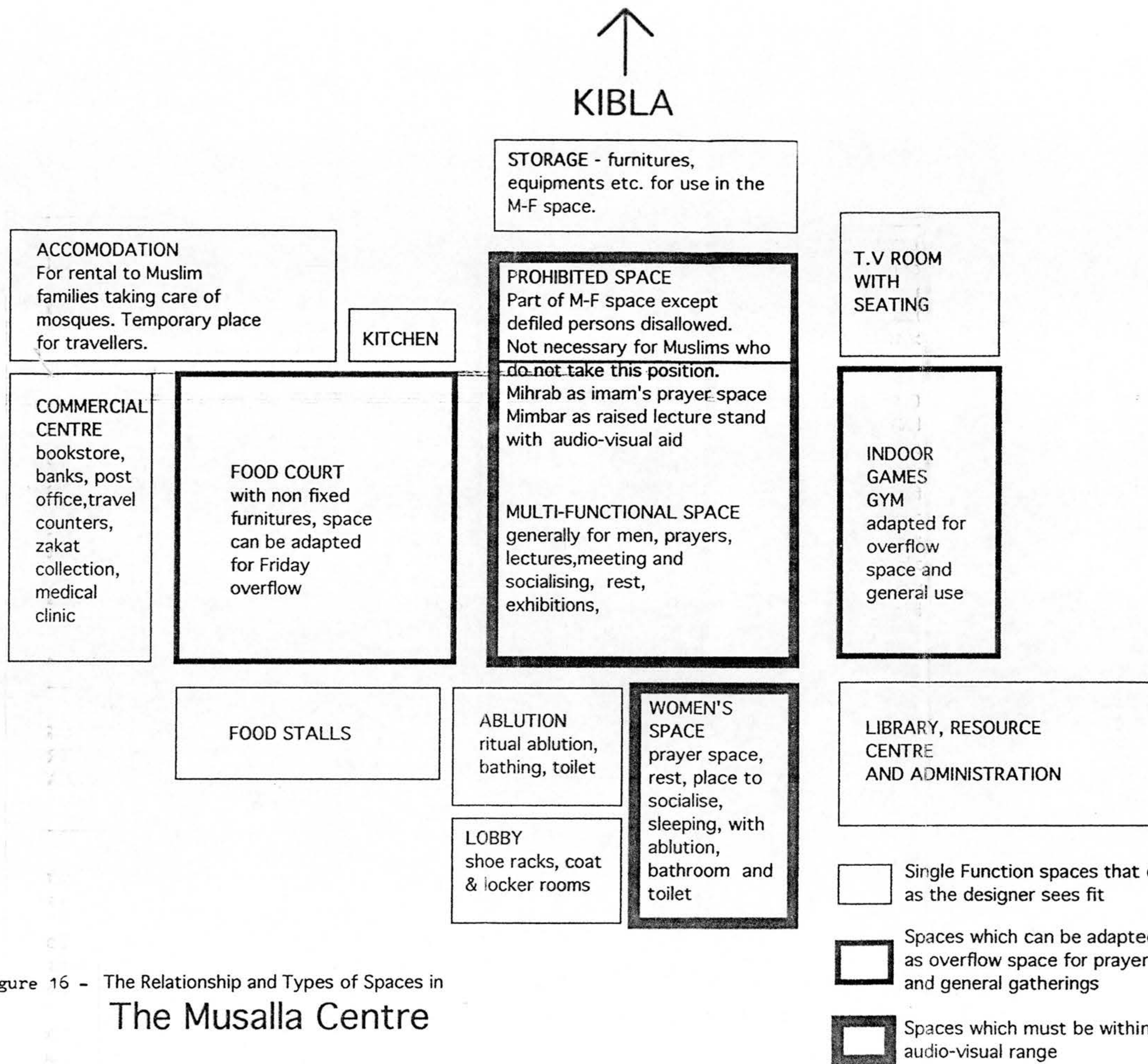


Figure 16 - The Relationship and Types of Spaces in
The Musalla Centre

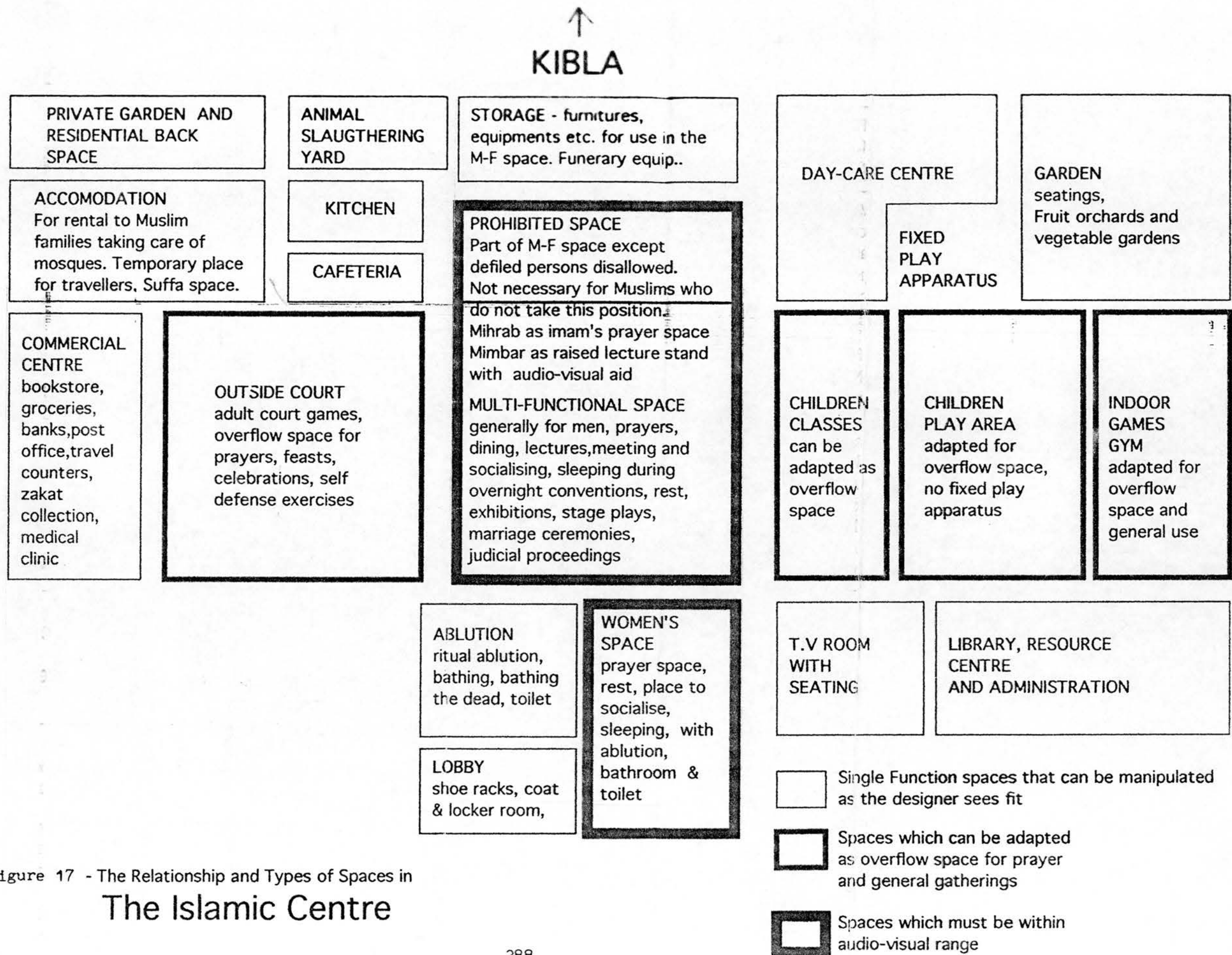


Figure 17 - The Relationship and Types of Spaces in
The Islamic Centre

such that this symbolic lighting manner is achieved. Secondly, the academics have also interpreted the dimly lit interiors of mosques as an appropriate solution to encourage meditative prayer.

The idea that the lighting in mosque which is symbolic and that it creates a somber meditative atmosphere have been entirely based on the assumption that prayer and meditation were the main functions of the mosque. Since the thesis maintains that the mosque is a bustling place of communal activities and houses many other functions it follows that the lighting system be made to fit these tasks. It is better to design the mosque with a general task lighting strategy than to encourage sleepiness in the congregation with dimly lit interiors.

8.4.6 The Geometry of the Mosque Plan

There is no religious preferences for a particular geometry of the mosque plans. Mosques have mostly been constructed using the square or rectangular plans. There are a few that have been constructed using the circular plan.

Although there is no religious ruling on this particular matter, it is important to clarify this issue lest it becomes a mere practice of aesthetic concern. The thesis maintains that the best plans for the mosque is either a square or a rectangular one. Mosque should not be constructed from any other geometrical shapes except the two mentioned above. This stand is not based on any metaphysical symbolism or religious verdict but purely out of a personal rationale with regards to the order of the prayer *saffs* or rows and its probable intended meaning.

When a Muslim prays in congregation, there are four important rules that he or she must fulfill. The first rule is that the Muslims must arrange themselves closely such that their shoulders and feet touch each other and leave no gap in between the worshippers. Secondly, the rows or *saff* must be straight. Thirdly, the front rows must be completed first before the others and should a worshipper leave his or her place in any row, the space must be filled immediately by the worshipper behind or those at his sides. The rest of the worshippers must move slowly to fill in whatever gaps created even if prayer has already begun. Finally, the rows must be arranged in a manner that there could be no single person praying in the last row.

The arrangement of *saffs* is analogous to a military row of soldiers which usually form either a rectangular or a square shape. One of the emphasis of the rules of the *saffs* in prayer is that of discipline. Another inherent meaning is that all the congregants stand equal in the sight of Allāh. It, therefore, follows that the best shape which suggests this idea of discipline is that of a regular sized polygon. Since the rows are straight lines which should be of equal length to simulate the idea of equality, it follows that the form should be either a square or a rectangle. Other shapes cannot produce the equality of length in the prayer *saffs*.

Although there seems to be a consensus among architects and religious scholars in preferring the elongated rectangle shape to the square one, the thesis maintains that there should be no such conditions. The preference for the rectangle has been based only on the idea to emphasise the importance of the first row and to give every available opportunity to the Muslim to gain greater rewards by being in the first row. Although the *ḥadīth* where the Prophet emphasises the importance of the first row is an authentic one it should not be stressed as a design problem in mosque building.³ This is because the *ḥadīth* may have many other interpretations than that the first row may have a special sanctity. The Prophet may have been trying to encourage the Muslims to be punctual at the mosques by presenting themselves early for prayers. There is also the possibility that he was trying to eradicate the reluctance of the Arabs in presenting themselves in the front rows. There are many cultures whose members are reluctant to be at the forefront either from shyness or that they do not want to be seen as 'showing off'. In this particular case the Prophet may have been making a statement that to be first in good deeds one should have no fear of showing off or be

³ The following *ḥadīths* indicate the importance of the first row in prayers, the importance that the rows be straight and the manner of standing in the rows:

Narrated Abū Huraira: The Prophet said, "..... If the people knew the reward for the first row, they would draw lots for it."

Narrated Anas bin Mālik: The Prophet said, "Straighten your rows as the straightening of rows is essential for a perfect and correct prayer."

Anas said, "Everyone of us used to put his shoulder with the shoulder of his companion and his foot with the foot of his companion."

Bukhārī, Vol.1, *ḥadīths* no. 688, 690 and 692, pp.387-389

embarrassed. On many occasions of charity, Muslims are encouraged to 'show off' by being visible in acts of charity with the intention of encouraging others to contribute but obviously not to gain a worldly reputation.

In this respect, there seem to be no point in limiting the design problem to an elongated rectangular model. If a Muslim was late for prayer, it should not be the problem of architecture to cater for his tardiness. The spirit of the first row is that one should compete for doing good deeds and not for the sake of reputation.

8.4.7 The Construction System

There are two types of construction systems used in mosques in the past. The first is the hypostyle system and the second is the dome system. It has been generally advised by most academics that mosque design should be in either of these two models.

The hypostyle system is named as such because it resembles the Egyptian temple plan with its characteristic forest of columns used in the building. Academics such as Grabar and Hoag considers this model to be one of the most unique contribution of Muslims to art and architecture. There is also a special 'sanctity' attached by the academics to this model because the Prophet had built his mosque in this manner. The thesis maintains the position that there should not be any limitation to the construction method of the mosque. If the idea of sanctity is associated with the historical tradition of the Prophet it should be born in mind that the Prophet had constructed the mosque in the most economical way he knew how. It is safe to assume that there had existed no tradition of dome buildings or large span structures within the geographical area of Arabia that he was familiar with. Furthermore, when the Muslims built the Prophet's mosque upon their arrival at Madīna, their economic situation was far from stable. Thus the Prophet had most probably constructed the mosque using the simplest possible method. When the latter Muslims were acquainted with the long span possibilities of the domes and its aesthetic qualities, they had used them not necessarily for functional reasons. Sinan has been known to have been obsessed with the construction of the dome to rival the Hagia

Sophia.⁴ There is no research that attempts to establish whether the dome was actually constructed out of aesthetic concerns or architectural requirements related to the activities in the mosque. Although Dickie assumes that the dome was built partly to enable the congregants to view the *imām* in prayer, it is highly unlikely that it be so. Firstly, the *imām* must stand at the same level with the congregation during prayers. There should not be a raised platform where he stands since the Prophet had step down from the raised platform made for him as a *mimbar* in the act of prostrating. It indicates that the *imām* is not a special person in any sacred sense but that he is given the responsibility to lead the prayer. If, then, the *imām* stands at the same level as the congregation, no long span structure will be able to help the worshippers in the back rows in seeing the *imām*. Anyway, the Prophet had already given the command that the first row should follow him and the second row must follow the first.⁵ In this manner the congregation has little problem imitating the *imām* in prayer.

Since there is no evidence either from the *Qur'ān* or the *Al-Hadīth* with regards to following the construction tradition of the mosque, the mosque can be built with whatever construction system that is economical to the particular culture it is built for and that it may adequately fulfil the many tasks of the mosque.

8.4.8 The Mihrāb, Minbar, Dikka, Kursī and Lantern

This section discusses the relevance and design of the liturgical furnitures and one of the common architectural elements of the mosque.

The *mihrāb* is one of the most important architectural elements commonly identified by architecture and art academics. Its presence is interpreted as important to Islam. In the light of the *Sunnī* perspective, the thesis maintains the position that the *mihrāb* is not a necessary part of the mosque. The thesis maintains this view because of

⁴ The poet Mustafa Sa'i inscribes Sinan's boast of building a bigger dome than that of Hagia Sophia on Sinan's tomb in the cemetery garden of the Suleymeniye Mosque.

Joseph Freely *Sinan* (Thames and Hudson: Augusto Romano Burelli, 1992) p.37

⁵ Bukhārī records the following *ḥadīth*, Vol.1, p.383
The Prophet said, " You should follow me and the people behind you should follow you(in prayers)"

its position regarding the suggested functions of the *mihrāb*. There is no concrete evidence as to the origin of the *mihrāb* and its intended purpose. Although there are some historians who try to relate the Prophet's spear as a form of *mihrāb*, this view cannot be accepted fully since the Prophet might have used it merely as a *sutra* of prayer. The *sutra* is a symbolic barrier so that other people or animals can pass beyond this point and those that attempt to pass between the Muslim in prayer and the *sutra* must be forcefully stopped. As to the possible meanings of the *mihrāb* as the symbol of the Prophet's presence or as a door to the Paradisal Heaven, the Muslim needs no such reminders or symbolism in the Sunnī perspective. Any attempt of creating a physical symbol of the Prophet can be interpreted as an act of glorifying his person over that of Allāh The Most High which will then be construed as a serious blasphemy. As for its reason as a directional indicator of the *qibla*, it is relatively unnecessary. If a Muslim walks through a doorway into the place used for prayer, his first clue to the direction of the *qibla* is in the lines drawn to guide the prayer *saffs*. The *qibla* wall is usually indicated by the fact that it has no door and that it contains the *minbar*. Anyway there are many other methods of indicating the *qibla* with wall murals or the difference in the floor finishing material. The study maintains that there is no harm in constructing a *mihrāb* but it should be understood that its presence is unnecessary. A good example to illustrate the interference of designers in insisting or forcing a design on the users is the controversial issue of the *mihrāb* in the Said Naum mosque in Indonesia. When the Aga Khan Award For Architecture awarded its prize for the design, the committee found out that in the initial stage of the mosque design the people had objected to the presence of the *mihrāb*.⁶ This objection may have stemmed from certain scholars who view the *mihrāb* as an attempt at imitating the Christian apse. Although the disagreement between the designers and users was resolved by other religious scholars it shows that there are cultures who object to its use. Islam views that there should not be great arguments over trivial matters that may divide a community. Since the *mihrāb* is not required as a ritual object or even mentioned by the Prophet, its presence is literally 'trivial' from the perspective of Sunnī Islam. Its strength only lies in its historical

⁶ Ismail Serageldin *Space For Freedom* (London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989) pp.181-187

continuity said to have been started by the Caliph Al-Walid and nothing more.

Unlike the *miḥrāb*, the *minbar* has its precedence in the time of the Prophet. The traditions mentioned that a woman had instructed her slave to build a wooden platform so that people can see the Prophet when he sits to teach them the religion. The platform was then used by him and those after him for a variety of purposes. It was not only used for the preaching of sermons but also for public announcements and as a political symbol of authority where the caliph would ascend it upon his election to the office. The present design of the *minbar* in most Muslim cultures seem to be an attempt to symbolise the presence of the Prophet and attaching the *minbar* to the sanctity of the Friday sermons. As regards the idea of symbolising the presence of the Prophet, it may have originated from the tradition of the first few caliphs who stood at a lower steps from that taken by his predecessor.⁷ This tradition was ended by a caliph who saw no significance in continuing this tradition. It would have been a most difficult pragmatic problem if the tradition had continued. However the idea of constructing the *minbar* with elaborate decoration and with a canopy at the top where the *imām* respectfully sits on the lower steps indicates that the symbolism of the presence of the Prophet is very much alive. Furthermore, the *minbar* is restricted in its use only for the Friday sermon.

There are three basic issues concerning the design of the *minbar* maintained by this study. The first relate to the idea of symbolising the presence of the Prophet. As with the *miḥrāb*, the practice find little use and have a serious potential for misuse. If there is any likelihood or possibility that an object would become a kind of icon in Islam, its presence should not be supported. The second issue concerns its restricted function as a sacred furniture for the performance of the Friday Prayer. Again, the issue here is an attempt to create a sacred object which finds no place in Islam. It is also an attempt at separating the religious practice of preaching from the 'secular practice' of

⁷ See James Dickie's 'Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs', p.36

The first *minbar* was a rudimentary affair of three steps fashioned from tamarisk wood, from the topmost of which Muhammad addressed the Companions. Out of respect, Abū Bākr, the first caliph, occupied the intermediate step, and 'Umar modestly used the lowermost; but 'Uthman said, "Shall we descend into the bowels of the earth?" , and thereafter everyone has used the the first step from the top.

lecturing or public announcements. The third issue concerns the requirements of the religious ritual of the Friday sermon. Part of the ritual of the sermon is the act of sitting down after the first half of the speech. No one knows why the Prophet had done so but he was consistent in this practice that it has become part of following the Sunna. There is, therefore, a genuine need for a *minbar* as a place to sit on following the tradition of the Prophet.

The thesis maintains that there is a genuine need for the construction of the *minbar* as an acoustical device, as a visual device and as a symbol of authority. The *minbar* should be designed to facilitate the act of communicating equipped with the necessary advanced technology of audio and video facilities. The *minbar* can then be the symbol that Islam does not separate the religious and secular functions and that it does not need any sacred object of religious significance for the performance of worship.

There is very little that can be said about the necessity of the *dikka*, the *kursī* or the lantern. The *dikka* evolved as a visual and acoustical device to lead the people in prayer. With the advance of modern technology this use is obsolete. Concerning the *kursī* for the formal reading of the *Qur'ān* it should simply be mentioned that in the *Sunnī* approach to Islam there is no such sacred ritual. The reading of the *Qur'ān* is usually either associated with its teaching or as part of a lecture programme. There is therefore no need of either a special furniture to hold a giant *Qur'ān* or a space for its reciter. The lantern is again another attempt at providing a sacred furniture to symbolise the so called holy light of God which finds little use for the function of the mosque outlined in this thesis.

8.4.9 The Minaret and the Courtyard

Two of the most common architectural elements associated with mosque design are the minaret and the courtyard.

The minaret is said to have its origin in the ritual of pronouncing the *adhān*. The *adhān* has its origin in the Prophet's time when the renowned Bilal Ibn Rabah was known to have climbed at the top of roofs to make the call to prayer. At the present time there is no concrete evidence linking the origin of the minaret to the *adhān*. This view is strongly suggested by Oleg Grabar. It is not difficult to support

this view if one were to merely think of the impracticality of calling the *adhān* from a great height. The higher one gets, the more difficult it is for the *adhān* to be heard. The most practical solution to the pronouncement of the *adhān* without the aid of the amplifier system is about the height of a building with a few floors. Grabar has also mentioned that the multiple presence of the minaret in the mosque may have been as a monumental symbol of Islam and the power of certain caliphs.⁸ The minaret, it seems, stands in Islamic history purely as a political symbol of the ruling patron and as the symbol of Islam's might over the conquered lands. It had also functioned as a place where fires were lit to signify the time of fasting or *ṣalāt*. Its role as the obvious sign of the mosque to travelers is an undisputed fact.

The thesis maintains that the most important function of the minaret is as an important landmark to signify the presence of a mosque. This element is particularly important as guides to travellers and strangers to a place where they seek the mosque for prayers and to spend the night. Its use as an acoustical device is made redundant by the modern amplifier system. The thesis also recommends that there be only one minaret to a mosque since the aesthetic decision of having multiple minarets run the risk of portraying the mosque and Islam as a building and religion of wasteful luxury. If, however, the minaret doubles as such functions as a wind tower, there is strong justification for its construction in any number.

The courtyard has also its precedence in the tradition of the Prophet's mosque. The courtyard of the Prophet's mosque had functioned mainly as a private place for the Prophet and the Muslims, as a fortress to discourage the enemy from spying or attack, as an outdoor prayer space during the cool hours of the day, as an overflow space from the covered portion of the mosque and many other numerous functions.

⁸ Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, p. 120

Inasmuch as we know that, at the beginning at least, the Muslim population was not concentrated in a single quarter but spread wherever there were houses abandoned by their former owners, the minaret could not have easily fulfilled its technical purpose of calling the faithful to prayer, especially over the noise of the city. I would prefer to interpret it as a symbolic expression of the presence of Islam directed primarily to the non-Muslims in the city. One may also wonder whether the peculiar proliferation of handsomely composed minarets in the later architecture of such towns as Isfahan, Istanbul or Cairo does not indicate the persistent importance of the minaret as a symbol of social, imperial or personal prestige or as a purely aesthetic device rather than as the expression of a simple ritual function.

The idea of the courtyard as a symbolic link between the earth and the heavens, as the wall which separates the outer world from the spiritual and as the place where the Muslim worshipper can mentally prepare himself for prayer in traversing the length of the courtyard are suggestions of latter architectural historians.

The thesis maintains that there is no religious need for the courtyard. The designer may include the courtyard within the specified relationship of the outdoor spaces and the multi-function spaces mentioned in the previous sections. The courtyard should be designed with the potential for a multitude of activities which also includes as a temporary overflow prayer space and as a the constructional framework for future expansion.

8.4.10 The Architectural Language and Expression of the Mosque

It has been suggested by psychologists that architecture and its elements are charged with meanings and that the whole ensemble of architectural vocabulary can convey a wide range of messages. In the past and at the present time mosque designers usually use this tool to communicate and express the grandeur of Islam's past and a host of other metaphysical symbolism related to the spiritual world and the ritual of prayer. The mosque has also been expressed as a fortress of seclusion from the worldly life while guarding its inner sanctuary. These attempts have been entirely based on the idea of the mosque as a house of God and as the place of prayer and seclusion.

There are three basic purposes of architectural language concerning the mosque that are suggested in this thesis. Firstly, the designer must use whatever vocabulary in the culture which he is designing to make the mosque clearly identified as one. It is deemed unimportant to debate about the origins of the architectural elements used whether they be pointed arches, horse shoe entrances or minarets. The designer should restrain the embellishment of the mosque to a point where it is recognisable as such. If a minaret suffices to indicate its presence, two or more minarets are not recommended or else the mosque runs the risk of conveying the message of extravagance in Islam. However, if the presence of more than one minaret is required due to several important functions such as its role as a wind tower or as an

acoustical device, they can be built without much controversy. The main thing is to present the mosque's signature without running the risk of projecting an exorbitant piece of sculpture.

The second purpose of the architectural expression in the mosque is to portray and design it in such a manner that it projects the idea of a public facility inviting to Muslims and offering the chance for non-Muslims to satisfy their curiosity about what the Islamic way of life is all about. The designer is free to utilise any psychological stimulus suggested by behaviorist in achieving this end. The mosque interior should be designed in a manner of an educational or a public place of social-interaction and not as a somber atmosphere fit for meditation. The quality of light should be as bright as an office space for general task work and not romantic with shafts of light in the midst of a dark interior. The whole atmosphere is of a bustling place of communal activity and not of silent meditation.

Finally, if the designer wishes to use a particular architectural style, the designer must ensure that the choice of style is acceptable to all the ethnic cultures that have embraced Islam. If the mosque is situated in a country where the majority of Muslims come from a particular ethnic group and where mosques have been built according to the architectural language of this culture, the choice of using its vocabulary may be justified. However, if the mosque is located in a place where there is about an equal distribution of ethnic groups, the designer should either choose a 'neutral' language or an eclectic composition that reflects the architectural vocabulary of a great majority of the ethnic groups so as to avoid an overemphasis of a particular architectural language that might make another group feel as if there is ethnic elitism in Islam.

8.5 An Appraisal of Three Modern Mosques in the Sunnī Muslim Society.

We have, thus far, described in great detail the principle guidelines for the design of mosques to suit the modern living and working patterns of the Sunnī Muslim society. This section contains an appraisal of three modern mosques in order to illustrate in greater detail and clarity some of the intricate aspects of mosque designs and how these mosques measure up against the guidelines set up by this thesis.

8.5.1 The Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Mosque

One of the biggest mosques in Malaysia is the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Mosque in the state of Johore. The mosque sits at the very centre of the campus which was designed in the image of the Malay traditional 'kampung' or village. The mosque is surrounded by a concentration of low rise academic and administrative buildings designed in the image of the traditional Malay house (Figure 18). At the perimeter of the academic core, the student hostels are grouped into different 'kampungs' or villages and each village has its own student and administrative centre which also functions as a dining hall. The UTM staff housing is also grouped in villages at the periphery of the student hostel villages. The mosque, together with the administrative building, convention hall and the main library are sited on the topmost part of the site.

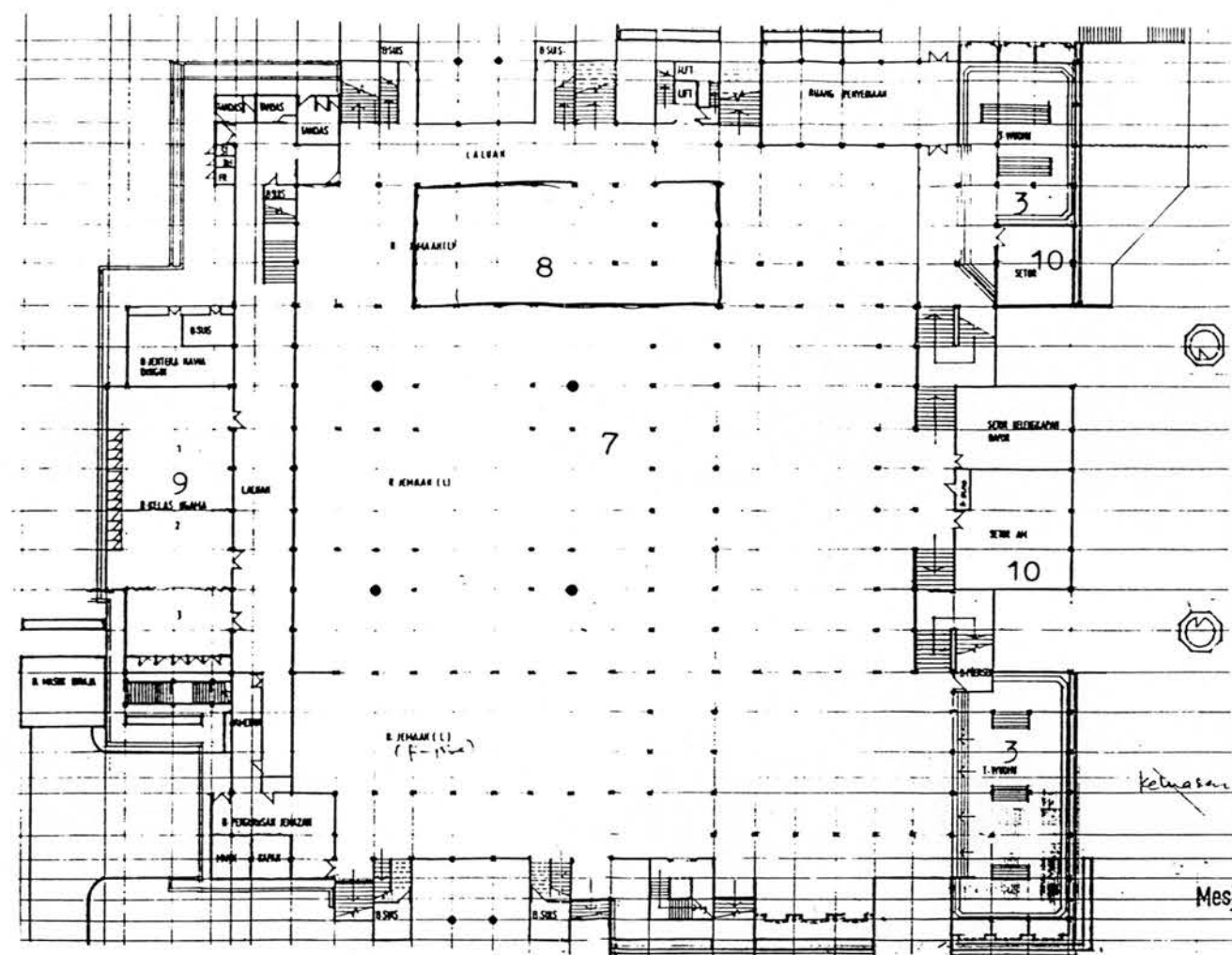
The mosque has three floors and a basement level (Figure 19). It is designed in the Middle Eastern style of mosques where the architectural elements used are an assemblage of parts of the monuments in the past Islamic civilisation. The dome is proportioned according to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The four entrances are reminiscent of the Persian *iwan* gateways such as those found on the Isfahan Mosque in Iran (Figure 20). The six minarets allude to the slender towers of Ottoman mosques. The *mihrāb* and *minbar* are miniatures of those found in the Prophet's Mosque in Madīna. Only the concrete balustrade uses the style and form found in the traditional Malay house. The basement of the mosque contains spaces which are meant to be used mainly as an overflow space in times of prayers. At the present time it is left open and free from any fixed partitions as it is used as an examination hall, feasts during celebrations and as places for studying. There is also a grocery shop and some rooms to be let to other small business activities. The ground floor of the mosque contains the main male prayer space, offices and a resource centre. The ablution spaces are distributed at each mosque entrance. The first floor comprises of the male praying space and the female prayer space which is partitioned using a screen wall. The women's space is also equipped with



- M - Mosque
- L - Main Library
- A - Main Administration
- H - Student Hostels
- V - Staff Housing
- C - Academic Core
- G - Main Entrance

Figure 18 - The site plan of the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia main campus area.

Courtesy of the Pejabat Pengarah Kerja, UTM

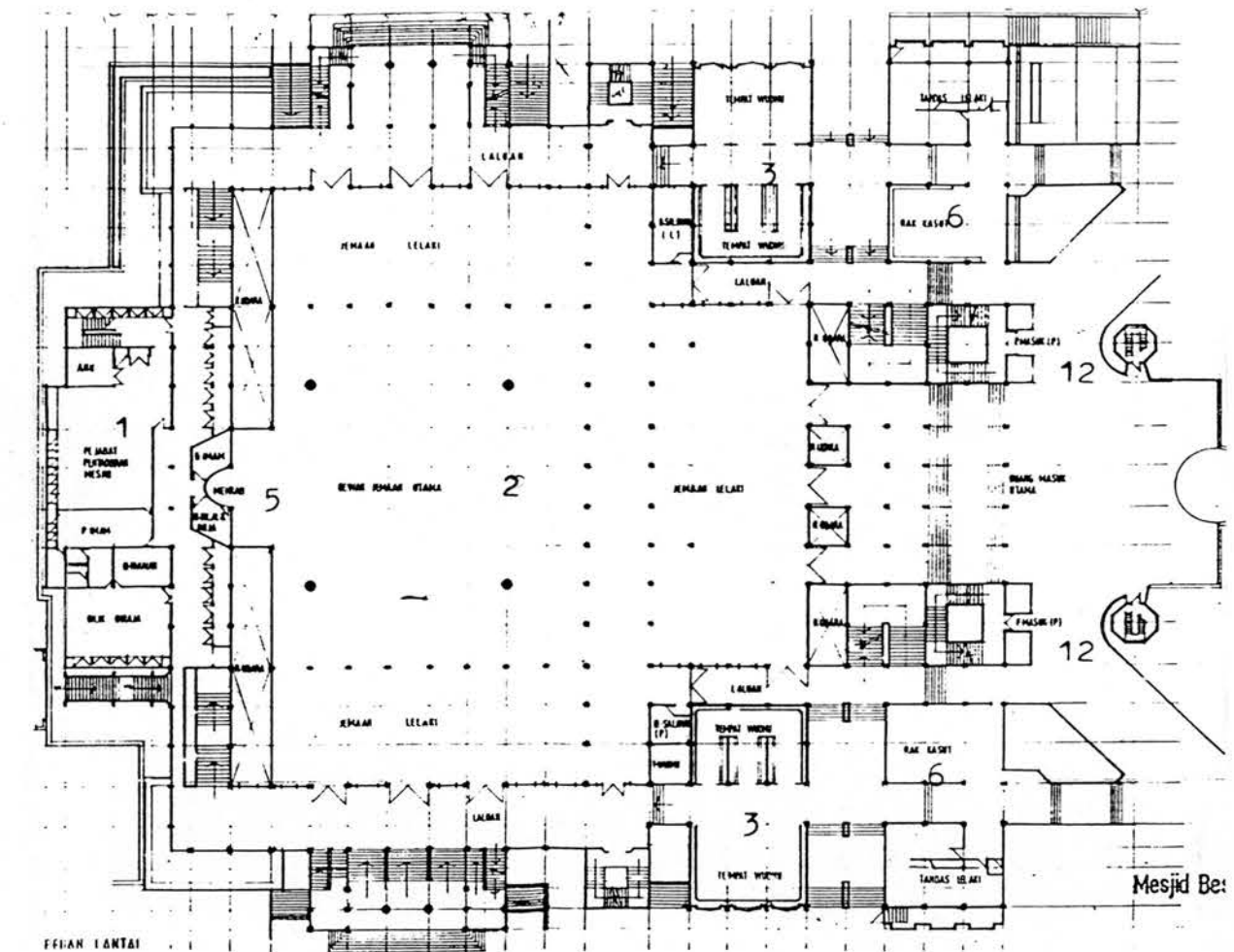


Basement level

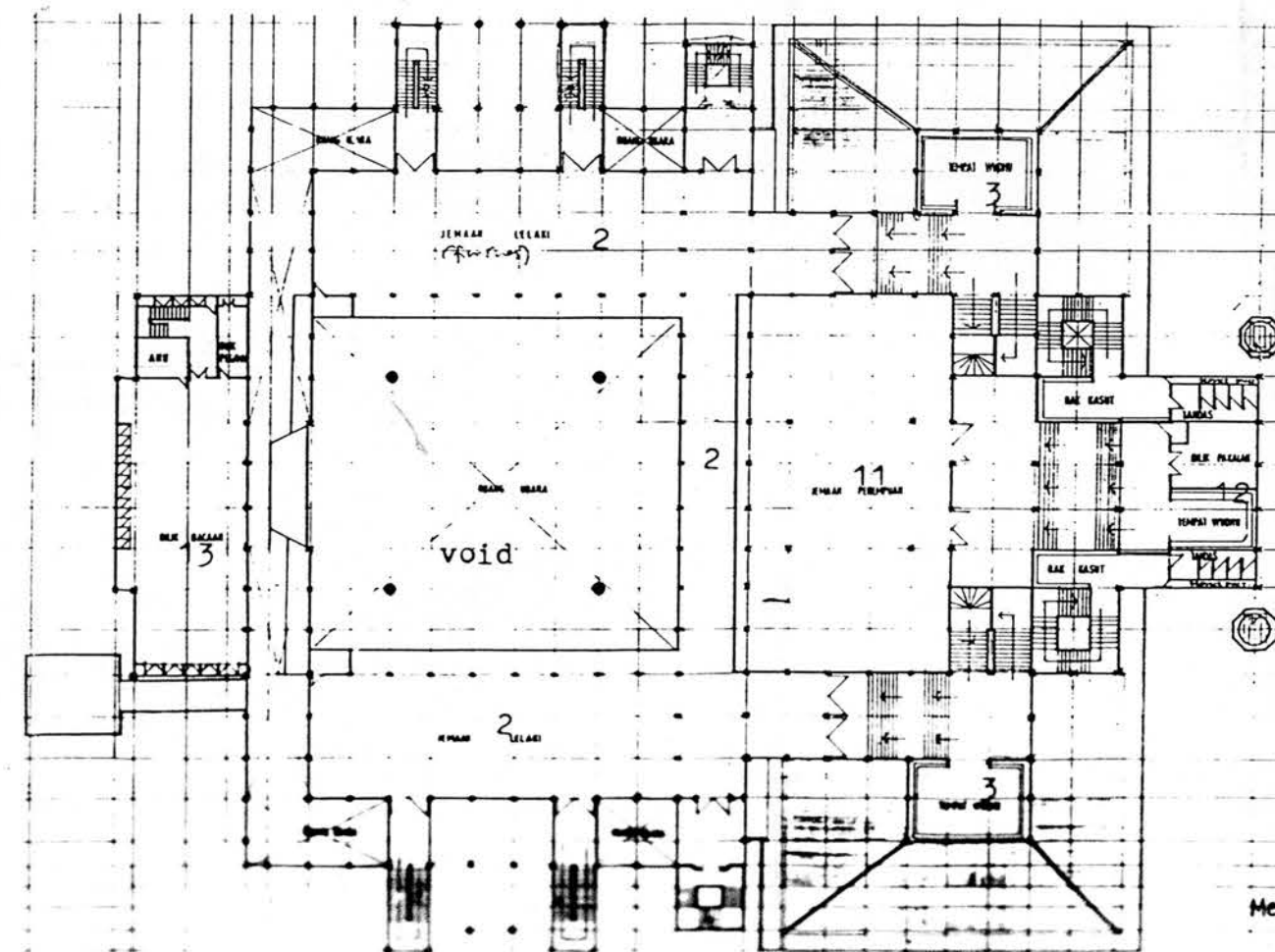
- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Administration offices | 9. Classroom |
| 2. Male Prayer Space | 10. Storage space |
| 3. Male Ablution | 11. Female Prayer space |
| 4. Funeral room | 12. Female entrance |
| 5. Mihrāb | 13. Reading room |
| 6. Shoe racks | |
| 7. Multi-purpose space | |
| 8. Shops | |

Figure 19 - Plans of the UTM Mosque in Malaysia.

Courtesy of the Pejabat Pengarah Kerja, UTM.



Ground Floor



First Floor

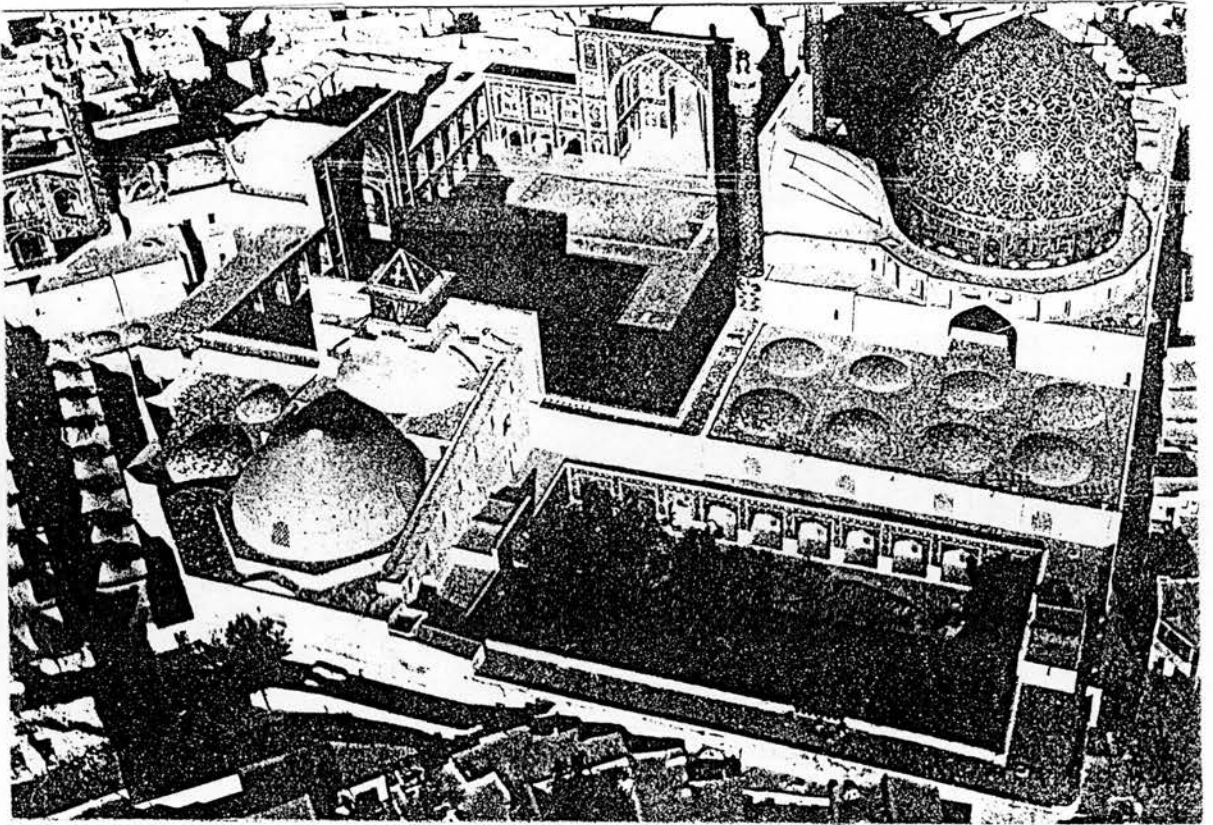


Figure 20 - The Royal Mosque at Isfahan.

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1978) p.18

its own ablution space and separate stairways. The second floor is meant as a prayer space for men only.

The UTM mosque is an excellent example of the crisis of mosque design in Malaysia. With the present awareness of the idea of Islam as a way of life, mosque clients are quick to propose their construction in the centre of a complex of building mainly as a symbol of the importance of the mosque and its integration with the daily lives of Muslims. The main problem with this well intentioned strategy is that the mosque is still viewed as a house of worship which caters primarily for the function of ritual prayers. The idea of monuments to the glory of God, Islam and the country's heritage still overrides any consideration of the primary roles and purposes of the mosque. In the UTM mosque, the overriding concern to symbolise the centrality of the mosque in the life of a Muslim blurs the designers' and client's eyes to the fundamental principles of mosque design. Firstly, the student and staff villages are too far from the mosque if the distance is judged not only according to feet and metres but also to the effort of walking or cycling uphill in the hot and humid Malaysian climate. The mosque seems to serve only those who are present during Zuhr and 'Asr times at the administrative academic building complexes. The mosque is even less populated at the other three prayer times. It seems that each of the villages have demanded the existence of their own *suraus* for their convenience in performing the daily prayers. Secondly, the siting of the mosque at the centre of the campus where one would have to pass through the security guards at the main campus gateway prevents the mosque from performing its welfare role as the place for travellers to stop and for the poor and homeless to find temporary shelter.

The mosque committee's objective of bringing the students, lecturers and non-academic staffs under the roof of the mosque in a spirit of brotherhood through various informal and formal activities falls through as the architecture of the mosque and the spaces it provides fail to attract many potential participants. There are inadequate spaces to convene at the basement and there are even less activities that can be done except study, sleep and pray. The shops and commercial spaces are hidden in the basement which makes a stranger to the mosque unaware of their existence. The mosque possess no cafeteria to even cater for the students and staff during the afternoon lunch breaks. Although the

mosque committee runs a kindergarten school for Muslim children, this activity is housed elsewhere and not within the mosque's vicinity. The outside spaces are used mainly as parking and as a garden without any strategy for making these spaces function as anything else such as bazaars or fields for self defense training or even as playgrounds for children. As it is, the mosque sits empty most of the time with the exception of some students and staff taking naps in its dimly lit interior.

That the mosque was designed purely for prayers with the other non-ritual functions as an after thought can be seen from its satisfactory handling of the prayer ritual function and its poor effort in the other functions. The multiple entrances with their ablution spaces makes the performance of prayer easy and there is not much congestion on leaving the building as there is ample spaces for removing and putting on shoes. The women's space is well designed as it is equipped with its own ablution space and situated at the second level with its own private stairways. The position of the women's space has been carefully calculated such that the first row of women worshippers are able to view the *imām* who is at the ground level. One serious problem which was overlooked by the designers of the mosque was the absence of a curtain to cover the latticed partition of the women's space. Since male worshippers are also allowed on to the same level as that of the women's space, they could see through the screen. Another serious problem is the potential use of the basement level as an overflow space for the male congregation. There is no visual link between the basement and the ground floor which, therefore, makes it impossible for the worshippers in the basement to see any row of worshippers on the ground floor. This would obviously create a problem of synchronising the prayer movements among all the congregation.

The Malaysian Muslim's inferiority complex to the Middle East can be clearly seen in the choice of the architectural language of mosques. The designers and client of the UTM mosque have opted for an eclectic design approach of using architectural elements which they have considered as sacred to cover the mosque in an aura of sanctity. It must be clearly stated that the use of such iconography and symbolism is totally unnecessary for mosque designs since these sacred elements are sacred only in their own physical and historical contexts. Their sanctity can never be replicated or transferred to any other place or onto any

other building. The design approach of using an eclectic assemblage of sacred forms has blinded the designers to two basic architectural criticisms. The first criticism is that since the whole design strategy of the campus was based on that of the traditional Malay house and village, and since there are numerous examples of the Malay typology of mosque architecture, it is most surprising that the overall design strategy and the existence of a mosque model are ignored (Figure 21 & 22). As it is, the mosque is totally out of context in terms of its visual language to the surrounding buildings of huge Malay 'houses' and 'palaces'. Secondly, the openness and humbleness of the Malay traditional architecture are not exploited in the fortress like building which communicate of a closed and isolated architectural message.

Thus, it can be summed up that the UTM mosque suffers from a case of lost architectural opportunities to exploit its position as the main activity centre for the predominantly Muslim population of the campus. It has the potential of being the centre of activity for an assured large number of congregants but it fails to attract a satisfactory size of congregation with its lack of commercial, educational and recreational facilities. The basement space has the potential of fulfilling these spatial requirements but it is buried well beyond the eyes of the pedestrian traffic above. The mosque has the potential of fulfilling its role as a public welfare and educational institution to aid the needy and the traveller by being sited closer to public access, staff and student housing but it sits way up on a hill close to those who would use it only once or twice a day. Finally, the UTM mosque has the potential of relating and integrating with the surrounding buildings through the use of the traditional Malay architectural language which speaks of humility and openness and yet it contradicts itself with a language which speaks a message of arrogance and meditative privacy.

8.5.2 The Great Mosque of Edinburgh

The whole mosque is divided into two main levels (Figure 23). The ground and first floor level are totally reserved as the 'sanctuary' or places of prayers and a private place for women on the first floor. Over two thirds of the building are meant for ritual worship. The basement level contains a multi-purpose hall, kitchen space, offices, library, ablution spaces and an information counter. Before the mosque



Figure 21 - UTM Mosque, elevations.



Figure 22 - Some of the traditional Malay house style buildings surrounding the UTM Mosque.

was built, the Muslim community had used an adjacent building as a mosque and with the construction of the new mosque, the old one will function as a *madrasa* for children, accomodation for Muslims and main storage area.

The mosque can be seen to have been designed totally as a house of worship with the other added facilities as 'extras'. The greater two thirds of the building volume is as a prayer space which is filled mainly on Fridays. On any other day, the daily congregational prayer is relegated to a small enclosed room as it would be uneconomical to heat the huge so called 'sanctuary' space. The word 'sanctuary' is used to describe the main prayer space as the architect, Basil-al-Bayati, believes the mosque to be very similar to the church in terms of the great sanctity of the prayer space. At a glance, the mosque seems to have three main entrances as indicated by the suggestive *iwan* type gateways on all the building's sides except that of the *kibla* but, in actuality, there are only two. The first entrance fronts the street opposite the University of Edinburgh main complex. The second entrance is awkwardly placed fronting a blank wall barely twenty feet away. From the layout of the plan, ironically, this entrance is supposed to be the main one as it is aligned together with the domed *mihrāb* with an aisle which has a raised clerestory roof. Since the main user traffic will be from the university complex who will enter on the street entrance and from the parking area on the opposite side where they would probably use the fire exit doors located at the base of the four stair towers, the 'main' entrance of the mosque has the great potential of totally being ignored. When a Muslim enters the building from either of the two main entrances, they would have to traverse to the basement level to perform the ablution and proceed back to the first level into the main prayer hall. This would create a congestion of worshippers coming down and up the small tower stairs. It would also create an awkward situation for non-Muslim visitors to have to also traverse downwards to the information counter.

As far as the provision of spaces to attract Muslims to the mosque is concerned, there seem to be lacking in recreational, commercial and cafeteria spaces. The multi-purpose hall is mainly used for exhibitions and seminars which leaves very little suggestion of its use for any other purposes. One of the best design features of the mosque is

the handling of the women space. The women space is a gallery at the first floor level where no male congregants would be allowed access. Although the ablution facility is at the basement level, the women's ablution space is directly beneath and connected by one of the tower stairs. Since each tower contains a fire exit door, the one situated at the women's space would also serve as the women's private entrance.

Apart from the above minor criticism of the building, there are two major issues concerning its design. The first concerns the architectural expression and language of the building whilst the second relates to the design of the exterior spaces.

The stone cladding, the four massive towers and the three majestic gateways communicate the idea of a palace or a fortress. The whole image is that of a closed private building in which the emphasis seem to be the protection of the inner world from the viles of the outside one. The whole building alludes specifically to a Middle Eastern image of Islam and convey a specific message of Middle Eastern elitism in Islam. Both of these architectural messages are clearly contradictory to what Islam stands for and as that outlined by the thesis. In the first place, the mosque should be a more open and inviting building in its architectural expression and not the opposite. In the second place, the Middle Eastern flavor in its language contradicts the internationalism of Islam. If the building were in a Middle Eastern country, it may have been appropriate as a solution to be in the context of the urban fabric and the country's past history. But since the mosque is not in a traditional Muslim country, a more international image ought to have been sought. As it is the building sits on its site and, accept for the stone cladding, is totally out of context with the buildings in the city of Edinburgh. There are no architectural gestures to relate either in form or proportion to the other low rise buildings in the area. Although there is a genuine need for the mosque to proclaim its separate identity to that of the many churches and buildings present within its vicinity, this can be done in a subtle manner. The unique form of the minaret seem to be adequate enough in conveying the mosque's identity. The *iwan* gate gesture is not only inappropriate in scale to the Edinburgh streetscape but it also connotes a Shi'a message wholly in contradiction to the majority of Sunnī congregation.

The questionable use of the T-cross plan in the building massing must be seen in the light of the rites and meanings of the ritual prayers. The roof of the prayer hall is raised in a T-cross shaped where at the intersection of the two raised roofs, the dome sits above the *mihrāb*. The whole layout is similar to the design of the old mosque in Qayrawan (Figure 24). Architectural historians have never been able to agree on the reason for the raised central aisle and the presence of the dome over the *mihrāb* in this old mosque. There have been suggestions that the raised central aisle was to emphasise the procession of the caliph and his entourage in presenting himself for prayers in the mosque. Even if that were true, Islam requires no such procession by either the *imām* or by any other personage. The Muslim form of prayer is one of the simplest form of worship that does not require this processional rite. Furthermore, the whole idea of the Muslim standing equal in the sight of Allāh The Most High seems to be lost in the different level of ceiling treatment of the prayer space and overemphasis of the *mihrāb* area.

As regards the design approach used for the outside spaces, there seem to be a lacking of any clear strategy. There seem to be no attempt to appraise the irregular form of the site and in developing an appropriate distribution of outside and inside spaces in the design of this mosque. The mosque seem to be designed as a single entity and would have been better placed on an island site. The symmetrical gestures in the massing attest to the appropriateness of its site to be an isolated one. Even the small library space at one end of the building looks more like an extension or an after thought. The outside spaces seem to be 'left-over' spaces as the mosque sits awkwardly on its the site in relation to the old mosque complex. There seem to be a great lost of opportunity to exploit the irregular site into an interesting one with the juxtaposition of spaces that must respond to the *qibla* axis and those that do not have to do so.

8.5.3 The London Central Mosque

Of the three case studies, the London Central Mosque comes closest to fulfilling the design principles set up in this thesis. The mosque complex contains a domed space attached to an L-shaped block which forms two walls of a forecourt. The other wall of the forecourt is

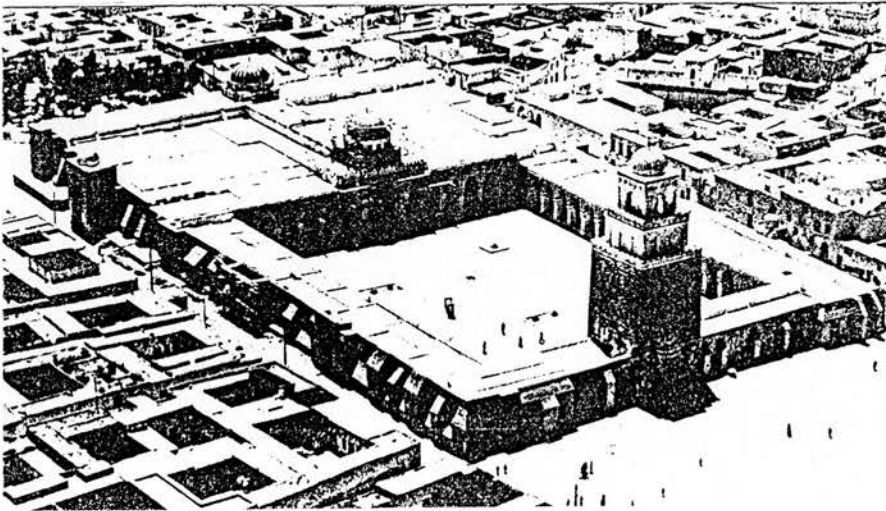
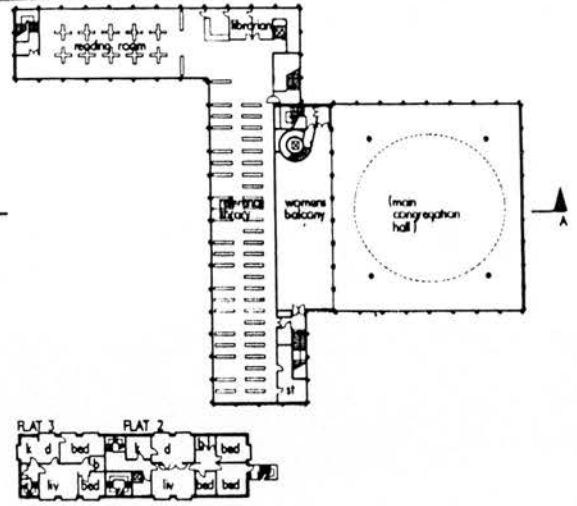
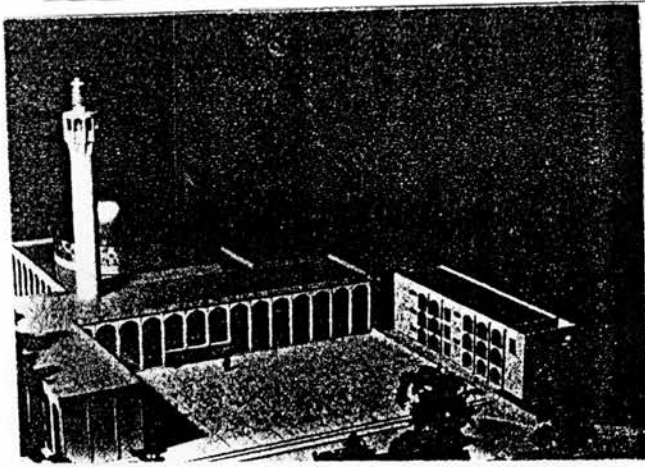
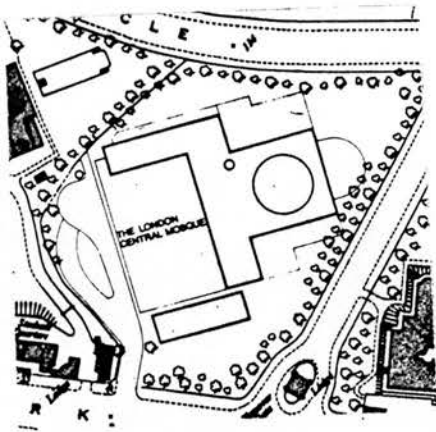


Figure 24 - The Qayrawan Mosque in Tunisia

George Michell (ed.), Architecture Of The Islamic World (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1978) p.18



First floor plan.



Ground floor plan.

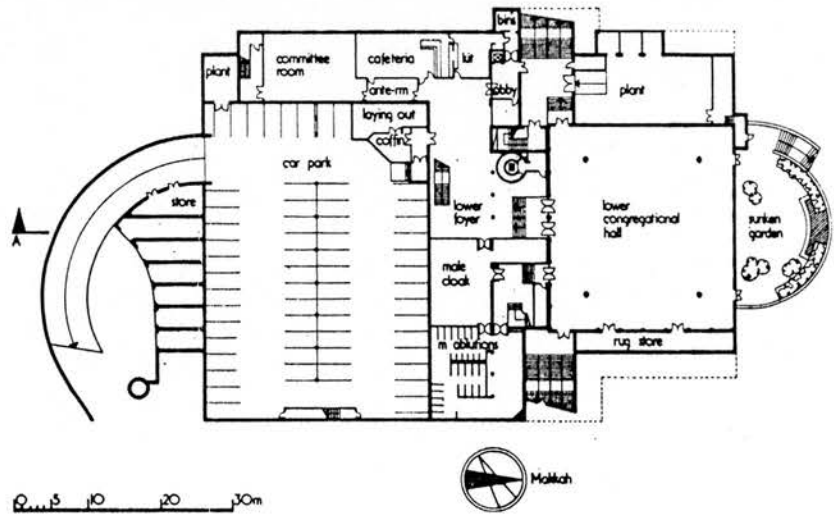


Figure 25 - The London Central Mosque.

RIBA Journal (June, 1976) Vol.83, No.6 pp.228-233

set up by a block of residential flats. The main mosque building comprises of three levels. The basement level contains a car park, cafeteria, male ablution space and a multi-purpose hall used as the daily prayer place.. The ground floor of the complex contains the female ablution space, offices, shops and resource center. A few feet above the ground floor is the double volume domed space specifically meant for prayers. This huge space is used only during the Friday and the two 'Id celebrations. On the first floor of the L-shaped block, there is a huge library space and private women's space which overlooks into the main prayer hall.

As with the Edinburgh Mosque, the women's space is adequately handled as its circulation to and from the ablution space is separated. The placement of the women's space at the gallery of the main prayer hall is adequate to fulfil the required privacy for women while allowing visual access to the male congregation during prayers. The existence of the cafeteria, shops and accomodation spaces would greatly ensure the constant presence of Muslims at the mosque to cater for its maintenance and to see to the needs of Muslim travellers or the non-Muslim visitors. The presence of the forecourt acts both as a private outdoor space but also as a welcoming space for the mosque's visitors. Unlike the Edinburgh Mosque forecourt or outside space, the London mosque's forecourt is aligned parallel to the *kibla* wall and can act easily as an overflow prayer space.

Unlike the sombre fortress like image of the Edinburgh Mosque, the London Mosque presents an open and inviting look with its double storey arcades of windows around the forecourt. Unlike the direct reference to the midieval Middle Eastern mosques found in the Edinburgh Mosque, the London Mosque's architectural language proclaims an uncertain identity which borders on an, 'international style' image that is appropriate for the international character of the congregation. The language of the mosque also acknowledges the fact that it is in a non-Muslim country and does not attempt to create an alien language to the visitors of the mosque. The subtle treatment of the dome and minaret is adequate to convey the unmistakable characteristic of the building type without overemphasising its presence as a 'non-Christian' peace of architecture. The dome which is set back from the two storey L-block does not overwhelm the building in its immensity and the effect

of being in the forecourt is that one is in the presence of a small scale building complex. Although there may have been an attempt to create a monumental scale impact of the arcade reminiscent of the Damascus Mosque forecourt, the small scale of the administration wing and that of the residential block prevent the monumental expression from being too overwhelming. On the whole, the mosque does not convey a grand palatial image but a plain and humble edifice which reflects consistently the principle of humility and moderation in Islam.

Although the London Mosque may seem to fulfil most of the principles set up in the thesis there are several questionable aspect of its design strategy. Firstly there is still the problem of the ablution space being at a lower level than the main prayer hall much like that found in the Edinburgh Mosque. The mosque could do with a bigger communal and recreational space and children play and learning facilities. However, the major problem with the design of this mosque is the in lost opportunity set up by the forecourt language of a bustling public square. The arcaded windows of the L-block does not show any human activity with the exception of the entrance lobby. The windows are that of offices and ablution spaces. It would have been better if the windows could present the visitor with a view of the Muslim in prayer as this is one that usually attracts non-Muslims to Islam and gives the Muslim visitors a sense of communal spirit and humility as equals in the eyes of God. The side wings could have better been used as shopping facades where they could be accessible from the forecourt to both non-Muslim and Muslim visitors. In this way the mosque would be assured of the continuous presence of people which makes it the true heartbeat of the Muslim community.

8.6 Summary and Conclusion

In concluding this chapter it should be emphasised that the above design guideline is a general one. The architect or patron of mosques can use them as a guide in developing the specific programme and design criteria in the specific local areas to suit the particular culture of Sunnī Muslims. Much of the programmes and design principles have been derived from an assumed general needs and problems of modern Sunni Muslims in a few countries and are entirely

based on our personal experience. The guideline has been based on an architectural programme derived from the combination of the eternal idea of the mosque, the ideal role of the Muslim community, the modern and traditional lifestyle of the Muslims within a technologically advanced age.

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1 Conclusion and Summary of the Thesis

The thesis is an attempt towards providing a solution to the question about the design of mosques to meet the needs of the present Sunnī Muslim society. The issue, as defined by interested academics, religious scholars and professionals, revolves around the problem about what the ideal purpose of the mosque in Islam truly is. Criticisms of exorbitant design, poor management and an over emphasis of sanctity have been directed at both mosque designs and institutions. A call is commonly heard to return to the spirit of the mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) at Madīna during his life time. There have been numerous suggestions at solving the problem of declining popularity of the mosque such as increasing its function while retaining its sacred prayer space function and also providing a balance of religious and secular functions of the mosque. None of these suggestions have serious implications towards providing a solution to the design of the modern mosque since they have merely concentrated either on the religious issues or sociological concerns while excluding the problems related to modern lifestyles and the demands of the Islamic code of life.

The thesis proposes that the answer lies in understanding the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque in Islam. Although it seems that the thesis supports the critics in agreeing to the importance of the mosque of the Prophet, it emphasises the point that to know the initial concept of the mosque is more important than to know simply what it was used for in the past. The initial concept of the mosque must be traced

not only through the historical sources but also through a deep scrutiny of the religious sources in order to comprehend both the social and individual demands of Islam which may have serious implications on the purpose of the mosque. The thesis also emphasises that it is not enough to understand what the concept of the mosque was initially but to determine what the eternal idea of the mosque is in Islam. This is because an initial concept may have been strongly influenced by political and social factors that changes with time and provenance. It is only through the consideration of both the eternal idea of the mosque and the needs and problems of the modern Muslims' lifestyle that a design criteria of the modern mosque can be derived.

The thesis then focuses on the analysis of the works of architectural historians and interpreters with the intention of understanding the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque. It was generally found that these works have ignored the issue of the eternal idea of the mosque and had merely treated the initial concept as a starting point of a mosque as a preconceived Muslim sanctuary developed during the Umayyad and 'Abbāsid times. On the whole, the historians have contended that the mosque is a house of god whose main function is to house the prayer rituals and as a place of meditative seclusion. Their position was established as the result of the variety of historical method employed, their personal agendas and approaches to Islam. The historical method used has resulted in the limited choice of buildings from an elite patronage, an emphasis in aesthetic analysis based on Western tastes and values, and an emphasis on historical facts over the religious concerns of the subject. The personal agendas of the historians range from fitting the mosque as a continuous evolution of the natural religion, a prejudicial choice of what constitute the idea of religious acts and practices and a personal crusade to support a stylistic, political, historical or artistic philosophy. The approaches to Islam used by certain historians concentrate mainly on the practices, rituals, beliefs and sources of the Ṣūfī and the Shī'a approaches. The thesis maintains that the works of architectural historians and interpreters cannot be used to achieve the aims of this study because their aims, scopes, sources and agendas differ markedly.

Having established that the works of architectural historians and interpreters had been based entirely on a different set of parameters

and framework of analysis from those outlined by the thesis, it was necessary then to reinterpret the idea of the mosque directly from the sources of Islam. The thesis has established the initial concept and eternal idea of the mosque through an analysis of the *Qur'ānic* exegesis, *ḥadīths* and a sample of work on *Sunnī* religious jurisprudence. This analysis was carried out so as to establish both the historical meaning of the mosque and the implications of the meaning of worship in Islam. It was established that worship constitutes both the practice of religious rituals and the performance of social responsibilities and obligations related to the mosque. The initial concept of the mosque was established to relate more to the functions which the Prophet's mosque had to cater for within the social and political context of the situation of that time. It was shown that the Prophet's conception of the mosque was as the place where he had consolidated and unify the Muslims while training them to comprehend the Islamic way of life. It was also their fortress as a defense against the hostile elements of that time. It was also indicated that this idea of the mosque has its origins in the culture of the pre-Muslim Arabs and that the Prophet had shown evidence of continuing the tradition of a multi-functional religious building as illustrated by the examples of the Ka'ba. The initial concept of the mosque was shown to have continued in the early part of Islam after the demise of the Prophet. In the latter Umayyad and 'Abbāssid periods, the idea of the mosque as a sacred place of pilgrimage and tombs of saints were introduced by the Shī'a and Ṣūfī followers. The caliphs had also introduced the mosque as a political symbol to rival the religious buildings of that time. Some of the functions of the initial concept of the mosque was excluded and became totally independent from the mosque.

The eternal idea of the mosque was derived by analysing the Prophet traditions and on the deeper understanding of the meaning of rituals commonly associated with the mosque. The practice and meanings of the rituals are not singled out as those directly concerned with the mosque's function but is analysed in the light of the individual and social obligations and responsibilities of the Muslim. Finally, the idea is also constructed by evaluating the pragmatic relevance and limitations of some of the functions of the mosque that was a result of particular technological or administrative context present in the history of Islam. The eternal idea of the mosque was thus established to be as the

centre of the Muslim's community intellectual and social development and the place to foster unity and brotherhood among its members.

The final part of the thesis contains proposals for the development of an architectural design framework or guideline for the planning and design of the modern mosque in the present Sunnī context. The guideline was derived from a general set of architectural programme which was based on a set of assumed needs of the present Sunnī Muslim and the eternal idea of the mosque. The needs and requirements of the Muslim community concerning the mosque are based on the problems directly related to the social demands of the religion and the problems of the modern lifestyle. The modern lifestyle of the Sunnī Muslim is a result of their living and working conditions within the context of modern transportation's and architectural products of the present age.

The architectural programme of the mosque was not only aimed at providing communal facilities for the various activities but it is also created to attract Muslims to populate the mosque as a social centre. Since the programme does not emphasise the function of prayer and treat the ritual as part of the many activities of the mosque, it frees the designer to use whatever design strategy found in community centres, commercial complexes and recreation places that would attract a 24 hour occupancy of the mosque. Muslims ought to find the mosque not just a place to discharge their religious duties but also as a place to gain access to important educational facilities or services and it serves as a pleasant recreational environment for the family to be in.

The thesis thus suggests that the modern mosques take the form of the Muṣallā Centre and the Islamic Centre. Both are mosques in every sense of the word but they serve two sets of users. The Muṣallā Centre is meant only for the users who populate the mosque area for short periods of time in certain parts of the day. There are not many activities that can be programmed since participation time is extremely limited. However it should be equipped with convenient facilities to attract the Muslim to occupy the mosque during the Muslim's lunch breaks and before leaving for home. The size of the mosque is not as crucial as that of the Islamic centre. Both mosque types should be located where masses of people are found for the user's convenience. They can

be designed as entities of their own or part of a building complex or a floor in a high rise structure.

The thesis emphasises that the design of the Islamic Centre is of crucial importance. Since its main purpose is to educate and foster intimate social relationship among the members of the Muslim community, its size related to the limit of its congregation is of crucial importance. The limit of the number of congregation is related to the idea of the *qariah* which can be loosely interpreted as a communal neighborhood. The mosque should be small enough for every member to acquaint himself with one another. The thesis does not support the building of huge monumental mosque to house thousands of worshippers because these mosque are mostly designed as a symbol with the visual impact of the physical structure becoming the overriding factor in design. It is better that there be more smaller mosques than a few huge structures for great number of people. It is better that the money in mosque design be spent more for providing the spatial facilities and equipment's in the mosque than spending it on expensive finishing, fixtures, landscaping and construction toward producing a monumental 'sculpture in a garden of seclusion'.

This is, thus, the solution that the thesis can offer to the present problem of mosque design. The problem of mosque design cannot be solved by merely adding more functions to its present prayer purpose. It cannot be solved neither by aesthetic controversies nor by a radical nostalgia for the past. It is only through understanding the spirit and way of life of Islam amidst the present needs and problems of contemporary lifestyles of Muslims that the solution to the mosque problem can be found. The existence of the mosque is neither as a symbolic religious idea nor is it a sacred house of worship. It is simply an important pragmatic necessity for the Muslim community.

9.2 Suggestions for further Studies and Researches on Mosque Architecture

The thesis was limited by time and the available sources. There are, therefore, many gaps and issues that had to be treated without much detail. It is important to identify these gaps and issues so that the

thesis may be strengthened. There are four areas of research that can presently be identified.

Firstly it is important to gain an acceptable knowledge of the meaning of the term '*masḡid*' and the idea of a religious or cultural centre of pre-Islamic people in Arabia. The present study has relied mainly on the source of Ibnu Ishaq and the early accounts of mosque found in the *Qur'ānic* exegesis and the *ḥadīths*. A deeper insight into the way of life of the Arabs is necessary to understand whether the Prophet was strongly influenced by the mosque model of his people in the initial concept of the mosque in Islam.

Secondly it is important to reevaluate the historical and the legal sources of Islam in order to examine the functions which the mosque of the past had played. It is important to examine not only the monumental mosques but also those which the architectural historians might have dismissed for lack of aesthetic significance. It is important to identify not only the various types of spaces in the mosque but also how they were used. In attempting such a study, it is important to include all the activities in the mosque and not only those loosely defined as important religious rituals. The study should also attempt to identify the relationship between the spaces in the mosque and between the mosque and its surrounding physical context. The findings are important not merely as a historical evidence of the cultural lifestyle of past Muslims but also to provide a basis for the siting and design of mosques in the present time.

The studies mentioned above relates to the historical aspect of the mosque. On the issues pertaining to the present, one of the most important is to define the meaning of *qariah* in Islam and to relate it to the idea of the ideal Islamic community in the modern times. It is then important to interpret this idea within the social and cultural context of the modern lifestyles in Muslim societies. The study on *qariah* have direct bearing on the siting and sizing of mosques in the present time.

Finally, there is also a strong need to clarify the assumed requirements used in the present thesis in deriving the mosque programme. It is important to verify these assumed needs through a detailed sociological study of the modern lifestyles of Muslims in relation to mosque design.

It is only through such studies that the proposal made here can be tested or corroborated for the benefit of Muslims at all time and in all places.

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Appendix I - The Prophet Muhammad's Miraculous Ascent and Journey to Heaven

The miraculous Journey of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Jerusalem and his Ascent to Heaven all occurring in a single night is given in great detail in A. Guillaume's 'Life of Muhammad' which is the translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah. I have taken the liberty of editing some of the text of the translation by omitting the narrators and have pieced together the accounts of the story as follows:

The Prophet said: ' While I was sleeping , Gabriel came and stirred me with his foot. I sat up but saw nothing and lay down again . He came a second time and stirred me with his foot . I sat up but saw nothing and lay down again. He came to me the third time and stirred me with his foot. I sat up and he took hold of my arm and I stood beside him and he brought me out to the door of the mosque (the Prophet's house) and there was a white animal , half mule, half donkey, with wings on its sides with which it propelled its feet, putting down its forefoot at the limit of its sight and he mounted me on it . Then he went out with me keeping close to me.

When I came to mount him he shied. Gabriel placed his hand on its mane and said , Are you not ashamed , O Buraq, to behave in this way? By God, none more honourable before God than Muhammad has ever ridden you before. The animal was so ashamed that he broke out into a sweat and stood still so that I could mount him. '

A narrator then adds, ' The apostle and Gabriel went their way until they came to the temple at Jerusalem. There he found Abraham, Moses, and Jesus among a company of the other prophets. The apostle acted as their Imam in prayer. Then he was brought two vessels, one containing wine and the other milk. The apostle took the milk and drank it , leaving the wine. Gabriel said, ' You have been rightly guided to the way of nature and so will your people be, Muhammad. Wine is forbidden you. ' '

Another narrator continues that the Prophet Muhammad said, ' After the completion of my business in Jerusalem a ladder was brought to me finer

than any I have ever seen. It was that to which the dying man looks when death approaches. My companion mounted it with me until we came to one of the gates of heaven called the Gate of the Watchers. An angel called Ismail was in charge of it, and under his command was twelve thousand angels each of them having twelve thousand angels under each of them. When Gabriel brought me in, Ismail asked who I was, and when he was told that I was Muhammad he asked if I had been given a permission., and on being assured of this he wished me well'.

Another traditionist continued: 'All the angels who met me when I entered the lowest heaven smiled in welcome and wished me well except one who said the same things but did not smile or show that joyful expression that the others had. And when I asked Gabriel the reason he told me that if he had ever smiled on anyone before or would smile on anyone hereafter he would have smiled on me; but he does not smile because he is Malik, the Keeper of Hell. I said to Gabriele, he holding the position with regard to God which he has described to you "obeyed there, trustworthy", "Will you not order him to show me Hell?" And he said, "Certainly! O Malik, show Muhammad Hell." Thereupon he removed its covering and the flames blazed high into the air until I thought that they would consume everything. So I asked Gabriel to order him to send them back to their place which he did. I can only compare the effect of their withdrawal to the falling of a shadow, until when the flames retreated whence they had come, Malik placed their cover on them'

'When I entered the lowest heaven I saw a man seating there with the spirits of men passing before him. To one he would speak well and rejoice in him saying: "A good spirit from a good body" and of another he would say "Faugh!" and frown saying "An evil spirit from an evil body." In answer to my question Gabriel told me that this was our father Adam reviewing the spirits of his offspring; the spirit of a believer excited his pleasure, and the spirit of an infidel excited his disgust so that he said the words just quoted.'

'Then I saw people with lips like camels; in their hands were pieces of fire like stones which they used to thrust into their mouths and they would come out of their posteriors. I was told that these were those who sinfully devoured the wealth of orphans.'

'Then I saw men in the way of the family of Pharaoh with such bellies as I have never seen; there were passing over them as it were camels maddened by thirst when they were cast into Hell, treading them down, they being unable to move out of the way. These were the users.'

'Then I saw men with good fat meat before them side by side with lean stinking meat, eating of the latter and leaving the former. These are those who forsake the women which God has permitted and go after those he has forbidden.

'Then I saw women hanging by their breasts. These were those who had fathered bastards on their husbands.

Then I was taken up to the second heaven and there were the two maternal cousins Jesus, Son of Mary and John(Yahya) son of Zakariah. Then to the third heaven and there was a man whose face was as the moon at the full. This was my brother Joseph, son of Jacob. Then to the fourth heaven and there was a man called Idris . Then to the fifth heaven and there was a man with white hair and a long beard, never have I seen a more handsome man as he . This was the beloved among his people, Aaron , son of Imran. Then to the sixth heaven , and there was a dark man with a hooked nose like the Shanu'a. This was my brother Moses, son of Imran . Then to the seventh heaven and there was a man sitting on a throne at the gate of the immortal mansion. Every day seventy thousand angels went in not to come back until the resurrection day . Never have I seen a man more like myself . This was my father Abraham. Then He took me into Paradise and there I saw a damsel with dark red lips and I asked her to whom she belonged, for she pleased me very much when I saw her , and she told me "Zayd b. Haritha". '

Ibn Ishaq then narrates that a traditionist told him that when Gabriel took the Prophet up to the each of the heavens and asked permission to enter he had to say whom he had brought and whether he had received a mission and they would say "God grant him life, brother and friend!" until they reached the seventh heaven and his Lord. There the duty of fifty prayers a day was laid upon him.

The Prophet said, ' On my return I passed by Moses and what a fine friend of yours he was! He asked me how many prayers had been laid upon me and when I told him fifty he said, "Prayer is a weighty matter and your people are weak, sogo back to your Lord and ask him to reduce the number for you and your community". I did so and He took off ten. Again I passed by Moses and he said the same again; and so it went on until only five prayers for the whole day and night were left. Moses again gave me the same advice . I replied that I had been back to my Lord and asked Him to reduce the number until I was ashamed, and I would not do it again. He of you who performs them in faith and trust will have the reward of fifty prayers.'

Guillaume, A. , The Life Of Muhammad: A Translation Of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah pp. 181-187

Appendix II ---Prayer in Islam

Introduction

The different types of prayer in Islam are distinguished not only by the time of their commencement such as the dawn or mid-afternoon ones, or by the particular occasion which it is performed such as the Rain Prayer or the Lunar Eclipse Prayer but it can also be identified by the number of *rak'a's* they are performed. A *rak'a* is the Muslim term for a single cycle of ritual actions and recitation in the performance of *ṣalāt*. If a prayer has two *rak'a's* then it contains two cycles of a set of ritual actions and recitation. The prayer that will be described is a four *rak'a's* prayer performed individually. This manner of prayer will be described after that of the *ṣalāt* performed individually. It should be mentioned here that the four *rak'a ṣalāt* is the prayer with the maximum number of *rak'a's* occurring with a single *salam* or salutation. Other prayers are either three *rak'a's* with a single *salam*, two *rak'a's* with a single *salam* and one *rak'a* terminating in a *salam*. It should also be stressed here that the only type of prayer containing four *rak'a's* with a single *salam* is the Zuhr, 'Aṣr and 'Ishā' prayers which are all the *fard* or obligatory prayers and is most highly urged to be performed congregationally and not individually.

The Performance of *Ṣalāt*

It was mentioned that *ṣalāt* or prayer in Islam consists of physical actions of the body in various positions and recitation of Arabic verses. The method of prayer that is described in this section is that of the individual prayer and comprises of four *rak'a's*.

There are four different positions of the body involved in the performance of prayer; standing, bowing, prostration and sitting position. There are four types of recitation commonly used in the performance of prayer, Qur'ānic Verses, supplication verses, formula of praise and repentance and also the *takbir*.

Ṣalāt commences with an audible pronouncement of the *takbir* which is 'Allāh is Great' while standing upright in a relaxed position with the eyes focusing on the ground at the place of prostration. During the pronouncement, it is recommended that the hands be raised to the level of the head briefly and then are folded just above the stomach level. The Muslim is highly recommended to recite the opening supplication which goes as follows:

'All the praises and glory to Allāh The Most High! I have turned away from every direction and set my face towards Allāh who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and I am not of those

who associate anyone with Him in allegiance. My worship and my every religious act, and my life and my death are for Allāh alone, the Lord of the worlds. To this I have been commanded and I am of those who obey.¹

After this recitation, the Muslim must recite the Ḳur'ānic Surā Al-Fatiha. The Fatiha is the most important Surā in the Ḳur'ān and is read by all Muslims in prayer. The Surā goes as follows:

'In the name of God , Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.
Master of the Day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship and thine aid we seek.
Show us the Straight Way, the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray.'²

After reciting the Al-Fatiha the Muslim is recommended to recite some Ḳur'ānic Verses or Surā.

After reciting the Surā, the Muslim would pronounce the takbir and bend his torso in the position of bowing with the two hands placed firmly on the knees. The eyes must still be focused at the same place on the floor as was in the standing position. In this position the following formula of praising Allāh is recited softly either once or three times: 'Glory to God The Most Great'.³

Next, the worshipper resumes the standing posture with the hands by his side while at the same time reciting the formula of praise as follows: 'God has heard the one who has praised Him, our Lord praise be to Thee'.⁴

Having completed the recitation once, the worshipper slowly bends down on his knees and places his forehead and the palm of the hands on the ground such that the whole body is supported by the 'seven bones' which are the two hands, knees, toes and the forehead. In this position, the formula of praise is recited once or three times as follows: 'Glory to God The Most High'.⁵

¹ M.A. Kidwai, Meaning And Message Of Traditions, a translation of Maulana Mohammad Manzoor Nomani's M'aariful Hadith, (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1978, Vol. 2, p. 151

² Ali, Surā 1, Verses 1-7, pp. 14-15

³ Op cit., p. 172

⁴ Ibid., p. 175

⁵ Ibid., p. 175

The worshipper then straightens his back in the sitting position where the weight of the body rests on the folded lower part of the legs while reciting once the formula of supplication and repentance as follows: 'O God! Forgive me, and have mercy on me, and bestow upon me the blessing of guidance, and pardon me, and provide me with sustenance'.⁶ Next the worshipper would repeat the prostration in the same manner as before. Having done, thus, the worshipper would slowly stand up to repeat the whole cycle again. The last prostration indicates the end of the first *rak'a* and when the Muslim stands up the second *rak'a* commences.

The second *rak'a* is similar to the first with two exceptions. Firstly the worshipper recites only the Fatiha and another Qur'ānic Surā or group of Verses. Secondly, the worshipper does not stand up immediately after the second prostration but sits down in the sitting position as described previously while reciting the first *tashahhud* which reads as follows:

'All services rendered by words, acts of worship, and all good things are due to Allāh. Peace be upon you O Prophet, and Allāh's Mercy and Blessings. Peace be upon us and upon Allāh's rightly guided servants. I testify that there is no god but Allāh and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.'⁷

The third *rak'a* commences when the Muslim rises from the sitting position and stands upright. It should be mentioned that each change in position requires the soft pronouncement of the *takbir* except when one is leading the prayer in which case the *takbir* must be audible to the congregation. The third *rak'a* is similar to the first *rak'a* with the exception that the worshipper is to recite only the Fatiha in the standing position. The fourth *rak'a* is similar to the second *rak'a* with the exception of reciting any Qur'ānic Verses in the standing position and with a longer recitation of the *tashahhud* as follows:

'All services rendered by words, acts of worship, and all good things are due to Allāh. Peace be upon you O Prophet, and Allāh's Mercy and Blessings. Peace be upon us and upon Allāh's rightly guided servants. I testify that there is no god but Allāh and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.' O Allāh, bless Muhammad and the members of his household as Thou didst bless the family of Ibrahim (peace be upon him). Grant favors to Muhammad and the members of his household as Thou didst grant

⁶ Ibid., p.176

⁷ Siddiqi, Vol. I, *ḥadīth* no. 798, p. 221

favours to the members of the household of Ibrahim (peace be upon him in the world. Thou art indeed Praiseworthy and Glorious'.⁸

Having completed the recitation which should be audible only to one's self the worshipper then turns his head to the right and then to the left while reciting the *salam* or salutation which in this case is also a form of supplication as follows: 'Peace and Allāh's Blessings be upon you'.

On the average, the performance of *ṣalāt* takes about 8-10 minutes. The Muslim may perform the prayer anywhere in the house or in the open air with the condition that the place is free from filth. The Muslim is not allowed, however, to perform *ṣalāt* on the graves or at the cemetery and at a designated place where one answers the call of nature. It is recommended that if one were praying in the open space one should place an object or construct a line just beyond the place where the forehead is positioned in the act of prostration. This is known as a '*sutra*' which is an imaginary barrier where no one is allowed to traverse through except beyond the *sutra* when one is performing the *ṣalāt*.

The *ṣalāt* described above consists of four *rak'a*'s. As for a three *rak'a* prayer valid only for the Maghrib prayer, the first two *rak'a*'s are performed in a similar manner as described above. The third *rak'a*, however is similar to the fourth *rak'a* of the four *rak'a* prayer. As for the two *rak'a* prayer such as that of the Subh or Dawn Prayer and most of the supererogatory prayers, the first two *rak'a*'s of this prayer is similar to the first two *rak'a* of the four *rak'a* prayer with the exception that instead of reciting the short *tashahhud*, the worshipper must recite the longer *tashahhud* and ends with the *salam*. In the case of the one *rak'a* supererogatory Witr Prayer, it is performed in the manner of the first *rak'a* of any prayer with the addition of the second sitting condition, the recitation of the longer *tashahhud* and the *salam*.

There are three other types of prayers that are different than those described. The Funeral Prayer is performed usually in congregation in front of the dead body which has been prepared for burial. The *ṣalāt* consist of only one position which is the standing one. There are no prostration, bowing or sitting in this *ṣalāt*. It is performed initially in a similar manner with the addition of special supplication for the forgiveness of the dead and for the living with the pronouncement of *salam* still in the standing position.

The 'Id prayer differs slightly than the ordinary method. It is a two *rak'a* prayer performed in a similar manner described for a two *rak'a* prayer with the addition of seven *takbir* pronouncement before

⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 803, page 224

the recitation of the Fatiha in the first *rak'a*. There is also the pronouncement of five *takbirs* before the recitation of the Fatiha in the second *rak'a*. In between each *takbir* a special formula for praising God is recited totaling five times in the first *rak'a* and four times in the second *rak'a*.

The performance of the Tasbih Prayer or Prayer of Praise and Remembrance, differ from the ordinary prayer by the recitation of 300 repeated *tasbih* which is the formula of Allāh's praise and remembrance. The prayer is performed twice with two *rak'a*'s in each prayer, hence the prayer has two *salams*. The *tasbih* is divided equally in each *rak'a* and is recited in each position of the prayer.

The Eclipse Prayer is comprised of two *rak'a* with the difference that in each *rak'a* there are two bowing position instead of one.

Ṣalāt is so important in Islam that there is no excuse for not performing it except in three cases. It is exempted for a menstruating woman, a person who has lost consciousness and a mentally handicapped person. Even if one is sick or physically handicapped one is still required to pray. *Ṣalāt* can be performed sitting if one is unable to stand. It can also be performed in a lying position by the movement of the head if one is unable to sit. In fact even if one is totally paralysed but in full consciousness one can perform *ṣalāt* by the movement of the eyes. When one is unable to stand because of being in an aeroplane or any vehicle, one is also permitted to pray in the sitting position. The Prophet and his Companions prayed sitting on their camels once on a journey.

The Performance of *Ṣalāt* in Congregation

The performance of some prayers in congregation is one of the most important aspects of the Islamic way of life.

A congregation consists of a minimum of two persons. Whenever there are two Muslims anywhere, *ṣalāt* can be established in a congregation with one of them acting as the *imām* or prayer leader and the other acts as a '*ma'mūn*' or follower in prayer. When there are only two Muslims in a congregation, the *ma'mūn* stands to the right of the *imām* without being behind him. When there are three or more Muslims in a congregation the *ma'mūn* makes up a row or '*saff*' behind the *imām*. The distance between each row including the first row and the *imām* is about 4-5 feet which is adequate for anyone in the rows to prostrate without touching those in the front rows and the *imām*.

With regards to the difference in merits for performing the obligatory prayers in a congregation at one's house with the family members and with other Muslims at the mosque, it is clear from the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet that the congregational prayers at the mosque carries a greater reward. This is true if one understands about the

importance of the communal life to a Muslim. It must be emphasised that *ṣalāt* at the mosque brings more rewards not because of the sacredness or special standing of a mosque itself but it is mainly due to the congregation and being with the Muslims in a community. This statement is true only with the exception of the three Sacred Mosques of Islam mentioned earlier in the introduction to the study. There will be further discussion on this important aspect of congregation and its relationship to the design of the mosque in another section in this appendix.

The prayers in congregation can be performed anywhere the congregants are whether in a house, or part of a building, in the open or in the mosque. The *ṣalāt* begins with the pronouncement of the '*adhān*' which is a call to prayer. The first *mu'adhhdhin* of the Prophet, Bilal Ibn Rabah who was a black slave from Africa, used to climb to the rooftops of buildings and pronounced the *adhān* in his characteristically strong and melodious voice. It must be stressed that the origin of the *adhān* is meant as a ritual to solve the problem of calling the congregation to the mosque at the same time where there was no common equipment or method to indicate the precise prayer times. The Prophet had mentioned in a *ḥadīth* that those who hear the *adhān* must respond by coming to the mosque unless there are unable to because of an illness or physical disability.¹⁰ However it should be stressed that this order was meant especially for men though women are not discouraged to respond to the call of prayer. There was also a time in the Prophet's life when he ordered that the *adhān* to be pronounced but in a manner that ordered the Muslims to pray at their homes because of the heavy rain that fell.¹¹ At other times it was also used to summon the Muslims to the mosque for a special announcement or matter to be discussed. The practice of the later periods of the minaret being used to sing the praises of the monarch and his family or for the reading of the *Qur'ān* are controversial innovations which is not a part of the Prophet's tradition or even that of the Companions.

The *adhān* signals the start of the time of one of the five obligatory prayers. The Muslims would flock to the mosque leaving their houses or work places. When they reach the mosque it is recommended that they perform the *Taḥiyyah al-Masjdīd* or Prayer of

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 617, p. 350

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, *ḥadīth* no. 605, p. 345

Narrated Nāfi': Once in a cold night, Ibn 'Umar pronounced the *Ādhān* for the prayer at *Ḍajnān* (the name of a mountain) and then said, "Pray at your homes", and informed us that Allāh's Apostle used to tell the muadhḥin to pronounce *ādhān* and say, " Pray at your homes" at the end of the *ādhān* on a rainy or very cold night during the journey.

the Masjdīd which is two *rak'a's* and then sit down to wait for the '*ikāma*'. The *ikāma* is a shorter version of the *adhān* but it signifies that the *ṣalāt* is about to begin. The *ikāma* is pronounced usually by the *mu'adhdhin* when the *imām* have arrived or when he feels that everyone has finished praying the non-obligatory prayer.

The procedure of the congregational prayer is very simple. The worshippers follow the *imām* in all the actions of the *ṣalāt*. Whenever a position is changed such as from standing to the act of prostration the *imām* would pronounce the *takbīr* in a loud voice audible to all or at least to those in the front row. One does not have to see the *imām* to follow his actions. The Prophet had outlined the process of imitating the *imām* by saying that the first row should follow the *imām* and the second row should follow those in the first and so forth.¹²

In the four *rak'a* prayers of Zuhr and 'Aṣr, the *imām* does not recite anything audible to the congregation except the pronouncement of the *takbīr*s for the changes in positions and postures. The two prayers are performed in total silence and normally takes about 10 minutes each to complete. In the Maghrīb, 'Ishā' and Subh prayers, the Fatiha and the Qur'ānic Verses are recited loudly in the first two *rak'a's*. There is a loud recitation by the *imām* in the rest of the *rak'a's*. During the brief recitation of the Fatiha, the congregants listen attentively and when the *imām* comes to the end of the final Verse, the congregants pronounce '*āmin*' in unison. In all the five prayers, the congregants would only utter three phrases and formulas audibly which are the *takbīr* following the *imām*, the *salam* at the conclusion of the *ṣalāt* and when the *imām* recites the formula: 'God has heard the one who has praised Him', the congregants would answer 'Our Lord praise be to Thee.'

Thus, one can observe that *ṣalāt* performed in congregation is probably the simplest ritual among any of those of other religions. It requires no furniture, sacred objects nor priest with long recitations or elaborate processions for its performance. There are no hymns to be sung nor are there chants to lull the spirit into deep meditation. All the visual concentration are not directed at any image or icon but cast towards the place of prostration in a deep expression of humility. The prayer service ends as briefly as it had started and the Muslim would embrace or shake hands with the ones adjacent, in front and behind and with the *imām* as a sign of brotherly love and affection.

It should be mentioned also that the *imām* can be corrected by the congregants when he has uttered a wrong verse and he may also

¹² Khan, Vol. 1, page 383

Bukhārī records the Prophet as saying, "You should follow me and the people behind you should follow you (in prayers)"

be reminded of any that he forgets during the recitation in *ṣalāt*. He may also be prompted by the congregants in case he misses a posture by the loud utterance of '*subhanallāh*'. This act of reminding the *imām* by the congregation is the best example of the concept of equality among all Muslims in Islam regardless of social or economic ranks.

The place of women in the congregational prayer is usually where it is invisible to men. However the women should have a clear view of either the *imām* or any of the rows in the male congregation in order to see their actions during prayer. Children who have not reached the age of puberty and are not held responsible for their actions are placed in the last rows. Only when they reach the responsible age would they be allowed to stand next to the men or women in *ṣalāt*. The place directly behind where the *imām* stands should be reserved for the most learned men in religious knowledge so as to prompt the *imām* when he makes a mistake and also to replace him in the event the *imām* becomes defiled and has to leave in the middle of the prayer to perform the ablution.

One other ritual connected with the congregational prayers is the *imām's* '*khuṭba*' which is a kind of sermon. The *khuṭba* is given in four separate occasions which are during the weekly Friday Prayers, the 'Id-ul-Fiṭr Prayers, the 'Id-al-Aḍḥā Prayers and the Eclipse Prayers. Among all the prayers mentioned, only the Friday Prayers is obligatory with the others are strongly recommended non-obligatory ones.

The Types of *Ṣalāt*

Prayers in Islam can be classified in many ways. They can be classified into those that are obligatory and non-obligatory, those that are to be performed individually or congregationally, the number of *rak'a's* and according to their times and occasions. This section categorises prayers into the '*fard*' or obligatory ones and the '*sunna*' or non-obligatory ones which are strongly recommended. There should also be a third category which is also the *sunna* prayers but are not considered as important as the strongly recommended ones. One of the differences between the two *Sunna* types is that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) seldom missed the first type of *sunna* prayers to the point that he would frequently make up for the loss ones when he was able to where as the second *sunna* type is seldom done and were not repeated if he missed them.

The Importance of *Sunna* Prayers

There are more non-obligatory prayers than there are obligatory ones. The '*sunna*' prayers are the non-obligatory ones but the

position of its importance must be understood as it has strong implications on the responsibility of the community and the individual. There are *sunna* prayers which the Prophet seldom missed and if he had he would make up for them. There are also those which he does not perform regularly or frequently. The *sunna* prayers can be divided according to types or to its occasions such as weekly, monthly or annually. In this section the *sunna* prayer is categorised into the ones to be performed individually and those recommended to be performed in congregation.

There are five types of *sunna* prayers that are recommended strongly by the Prophet to be performed in congregation although their performance individually is allowed. The five prayers are the two 'Id Prayers, the two Eclipse Prayers, the Rain Prayer, the Tarāwīḥ Prayer and the Funeral Prayer.

There are two Id Prayers in a single year. The first is known as the 'Id-ul-Fitr which celebrates the end of the fasting month of Ramaḍān. Muslims celebrate this occasion because of their victory over the self in subduing the passion for overindulgence in food and wealth where the month is spent in hunger, containment of the sexual urges, generosity with one's wealth and constant remembrance of God through many *sunna* prayers such as the Tarāwīḥ, Witr and others. The 'Id-ul-Adḥā celebrates the *ḥaḍj* ritual and the Sacrifice of Ibrāhīm where Muslims feed the poor and needy with the ritual '*qurbān*' of their self and members through the slaughter of sheep, camels, cows and buffaloes. The 'Id Prayers begin with the two rak'a *ṣalāt* as described previously. There is a short sermon after the prayers. When the service is over the Muslims would enjoy some food and each other's company at the mosque before dispersing to visit their friends and relatives during this occasion.¹³

The Lunar and Solar Eclipse Prayers are performed only when the Eclipse is visible to the Muslim of a community. The Muslim prays during the Eclipse as a sign of reverence of Allāh The Most High for his special sign.¹⁴

The Rain Prayer is performed by the Muslim community whenever an exceptionally long draught is experienced. The Prophet

¹³ The Prophet is known to have usually performed the 'Id Prayers in the open fields outside of the Mosque. His reasons for this is uncertain whether it is due to the presence of menstruating women or due to overcrowding of the mosque.

¹⁴ Although none of the jurist mentioned the reason for the prayer, most would only quote the *ḥadīth* related to the death of the Prophet's son Ibrāhīm where the unbelievers had gathered in fear at the event of a Solar Eclipse fearing that it was a sign of God's wrath for their ill treatment of the Prophet and his family. The Prophet had calmly told the unbelievers that the Eclipse was merely one of the great signs of God and it does not happen because of the death of any person. The Eclipse Prayer is performed in the manner described in the previous section. There is also a short *khutbā* at the end of the prayer.

had led every member of the community to an open field where he led in the two *rak'a* prayer and sat down for a long time in supplication to Allāh The Most Beneficent to ask for rain. This *ṣalāt* is important for it symbolizes man's weakness in the 'eyes' of Allāh and reminds man of his dependence on Allāh for the many things which he has simply taken for granted such as food and water. This act of humility increases the relationship between Allāh and His servant for Allāh loves those who thinks of him and the Muslim feels his smallness in the sight of Allāh.

The Tarāwīḥ Prayer is performed every night during the fasting month of Ramadhān and it begins after the 'Ishā' Prayer. The Tarāwīḥ Prayer is one of the most controversial prayers with respect to its manner of performance where the jurists differed on the issue of performing it in congregation or in an individual manner. Syed Sabiq and Imām Ghazali both favoured the performance of the prayer in congregation though they were careful to illustrate the true history of its individual performance by the Prophet.¹⁵ Imām Shāfi'ī favoured the performance of this prayer individually.¹⁶ The traditions mentions that the Prophet had prayed the Tarāwīḥ during the month of Ramadhān and word had got out to the Muslims who gathered at the mosque and prayed with him.¹⁷ This event occurred for several nights until a time when the Prophet did not come out for the Tarāwīḥ prayer. After the morning prayer the Prophet told the people that he had not come out to pray the Tarāwīḥ Prayer for fear that the prayer might be interpreted as a *fard* prayer. Hence the Muslims from that day onwards had prayed individually until after the demise of the Prophet, 'Umar who came to the mosque and saw many of the Muslim praying separately and he decided that it would have been better to gather the worshippers under a single *imām* and pray in congregation.¹⁸ 'Umar had probably done so as he understood that the spirit of the mosque lies in its strength in the importance of congregation, unity and brotherhood where the mosque is not a place for the practice of individualism or factionalism. The Tarāwīḥ prayer consist of two *rak'a* prayer which may be repeated to the favored number of twenty until which a three *rak'a* Witr prayer to signify the conclusion of the prayer is performed. It is believed that the purpose of the Tarāwīḥ prayer is to train the Muslim in the performance of the Tahajjud Prayer apart from the concept of taking

¹⁵ Ibid., page 63. See also Imām Ghazali's *Ihya Ulumuddin* translated by Ismail Yakub, Kuala Lumpur: Victory Agencie, 1988), pp.664-666

¹⁶ Shafie, Vol. I, p.317

¹⁷ Khan, Vol. 3, *ḥadīth* no. 229, pp.127-128

¹⁸ Ibid., *ḥadīth* no. 227, page 126

the opportunity of the holy month to perform as much devotions for the remembrance of Allāh The Most High.

There are many types of *sunna* prayers which are to be performed individually preferably in the privacy of one's own house. It is most essential to understand these types of prayers because it has an indirect implication on the meaning and purpose of the mosque.

The first type of the individual *sunna* prayers is a group of *ṣalāt* known as the Rawatib Prayers. These prayers are performed just before or just after a *fard ṣalāt*. Each of them is a two *rak'a* prayer. When the Prophet is at home and not in an expedition he rarely misses these prayers and if he had he would make up for its loss by praying at another time. There are altogether 12 *rak'a*'s of Rawatib Prayers distributed as follows: two *rak'a*'s before the Dawn Prayer, two *rak'a*'s before and after the Noon Prayer, two *rak'a*'s before the Late Afternoon Prayer, two *rak'a*'s after the Sunset Prayer and two *rak'a*'s after the Night Prayer. The importance of these prayers are such that certain jurists within the Sunnī Muslim consider them as almost equivalent to the performance of the obligatory prayers such that they should not be missed. However it must be understood that these *sunna* prayers are not equivalent in merit or rewards to the *fard* prayers because the *fard* prayers are performed in congregation where as the Rawatib Prayers are recommended to be performed individually.

The *Dhuhā* Prayer is another *sunna* which the Prophet loves to perform. One can perform this prayer with at least two *rak'a*'s and at the most twelve *rak'a*'s. The time of its prayer is between when the sun is about a quarter way up in the sky in the morning until just before the time of the Mid-Afternoon Prayer. It is important to point out that there is no *sunna* prayer when the Dawn Prayer time ends which is when the sun has risen. Between this time and the time of the *Dhuhā* Prayer, the Prophet warns the Muslim against praying during this time. It is said that the Prophet feared that the performance of prayer when the Sun is rising may be misinterpreted as the glorification and worship of the sun.

The Witr Prayer is one of two *sunna* prayers that teaches and encourages the Muslim to perform the '*qiyam-u-lail*' or 'standing throughout the night in prayer'. The time of this prayer is after the performance of the Night Prayer and can last till the time of the Dawn Prayer. The Prophet has been known to perform the prayer with one, three, five, seven, nine, eleven or thirteen *rak'a*'s. The Muslim is recommended to do the same according to each own capacity. The Witr Prayer and the Tahadjjud Prayer can be considered as the two most important Sunnat and individual prayers for their performance, especially that of the Tahadjjud Prayer, is mentioned in the *Qur'ān*.

Of the two *sunna* prayers mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Tahadjjud Prayer is the most important because the Kur'ān alludes to its performance in many Verses such as:

'O thou folded in garments! Stand to prayer by night, but not all night. Half of it or a little less. Or a little more and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones. Soon shall We send down to thee a weighty Message. Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing the soul and most suitable for framing The Word (of Prayer and Praise).' ¹⁹

'Establish regular prayers at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer, and reading: for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony. And pray in the small watches of the morning (late night). It would be an additional prayer (of spiritual profit) for thee: soon thy Lord will raise thee to a Station of Praise and Glory.' ²⁰

The Tahadjjud prayer is the most challenging *sunna* prayer to perform as it requires that the prayer be performed after midnight and after one has gone to sleep. If one does not sleep then one can only perform the Witr prayer for the Tahadjjud stresses that the prayer is to be performed after awakening in the later part of the night. This is the best time, as explained in the Kur'ān, for the Muslim to meditate and communicate with Allāh The Merciful because the world of the early morning hours is silent and purifies the soul from the hectic concerns of the day:

'Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing the soul and most suitable for framing The Word (of Prayer and Praise).' ²¹

'It is We Who have sent down the Qur'an in stages. Therefore be patient with constancy to the Command of thy Lord, and harken not to the sinner and ingrate among them. And celebrate the name of thy Lord morning and evening. And part of the night, prostrate thyself to Him, and glorify Him, A long night through.' ²²

¹⁹ Ali, Surā 73, Verses 1-6, p.1633

²⁰ Ibid Surā 17, Verse 79, p.717

²¹ Ibid., Surā 73, Verse 6, p.1633

²² Ibid., Surā 76, Verses 23-26, pp.1659-1660

These are the hours most conducive to contemplate about the many mysteries of life and death and the best time to seek repentance from Allāh The Compassionate. The intention of prayer is purer in the Tahajjud Prayer because one stands alone for prayer without anyone seeing as in the congregational prayers. The intention is more sincere since one has strived hard to tear oneself from the comfort of the bed and slumber to face the Creator in worship. The Muslim can pray from three to thirteen rak'a's of Tahajjud Prayer. The Prophet used to stand until his feet were swollen in the performance of this prayer as indicated in the following *ḥadīth*:

Narrated Al-Mughīra: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to stand (in the prayer or pray till both feet swelled. He was asked why (he offered such an unbearable prayer though his past and future sins are forgiven by Allāh) and he said, "Should I not be a thankful slave?"²³

It is related on the authority of Abu Umma that the Apostle of God said: "You should offer Tahajjud for it has been the way of the pious souls before you and it is a special means of seeking the countenance of the Lord and it removes the evil effects of sins and protects from the transgression of God-given laws."²⁴

It is important to comprehend what is recited in the Tahajjud Prayer in order to understand the significance of this prayer as possessing a higher level of concentration and meditation than the brief fard prayers. The recitation is as follows:

Narrated Ibn 'Abbās: when the Prophet (peace be upon him) got up at night to offer the Tahajjud prayer he used to say: "O Allāh! All the praises are for You; You are the Holder of the Heavens and the Earth and whatever is in them. All the praises are for You; You have the possession of the Heavens and the Earth and whatever is in them. All the praises are for You. You are the Light of the Heavens and the Earth and all the praises are for You. You are the King of the Heavens and the Earth and all the praises are for You. You are the Truth and Your Promise is the Truth, and to meet You is true, Your Word is the truth, and Paradise is true and Hell is true, and all the Prophets (peace be upon them) are true, and Muhammad is true, and the Day of Resurrection is

²³ Ibid, Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 230, pp. 128-129

²⁴ Kidwai, Volume 2, p.205

true. O Allāh! I surrender my will to You. I believe in You and depend on You, and repent to You, and with Your help I argue (with my opponents, the non-believers), and take You as a Judge. Please forgive me my previous and future sins, and whatever concealed or revealed. And You are the One who make some people forward or backward. There is none to be worshipped but you.²⁵

This type of recitation does not exist in any other prayer and it shows Allāh's special relation with the worshipper when he stands for this prayer.

The individual *sunna* prayers described above are those that can be performed everyday. The Muslim is recommended to practice regularly some of the prayers until such time when all of them can be performed daily. The Muslim can use the performance of these prayers as an indicator of his faith as the one whose faith increases loves to perform the individual prayers whereas the one who decreases in faith neglects the individual prayers. The Muslim must understand that the *fard* prayers are the minimum number of prayers and they should strive to increase their faith in performing many deeds loved by Allāh The Most High among which is the performance of the *sunna* prayers. Apart from the daily *sunna* prayers described previously, there are also a few other *sunna* prayers that can be performed occasionally when the desire or need arises. They are the Tahīyyah al-Masjdīd, the Tasbih Prayer, the Hājat Prayer, the Istikhāra Prayer and the Taubah Prayer.

The Tahīyyah al-Masjdīd may be performed any time a Muslim enters a mosque for whatever intention he has in the mosque. This is the only individual *sunna* prayer that must be performed in the mosque as it is the prayer to signify one's respect for the mosque. The implication of this prayer on the idea of sanctity of the mosque is discussed at the end of this section.

The Tasbih Prayer is a prayer purely for the praising of Allāh The Most Merciful. 'Tasbih' is an Arabic word meaning 'to praise'. The four *rak'a* prayer is filled with the repetition of the formula of praise which numbers precisely 300 times. The manner of its performance is described in the previous section on the method of prayer. This prayer can be performed either once a week, once a month, or once a year and the least of all, once in a lifetime.

The Hājat Prayer is a two *rak'a* prayer performed by a Muslim at any time except the taboo times of prayer whenever the Muslim wishes to ask Allāh for something of this life such as a cure for a disease, a successful examination result, successful business transaction

²⁵ Khan., Vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 221, pp.123-124

or whatever. The Muslim must be careful of what he asks for because some of the requests within the confines of the Shari'a may not bring the Muslim any good. For instance if one wishes for wealth only, and if it is granted, the Muslim may be tempted for more or it may bring insecurity or threat of life to him or her. But if one wishes the wealth for the performance of good deeds for the community and other Muslims then the wealth yields multiple rewards in the hereafter for the Muslim. The Muslim would ask for these requests during a long prostration in the final *rak'a* of the prayer. It should be mentioned, however, that the Muslim must make every effort within his capacity to achieve his request and only after that would he or she be permitted to seek help through such a prayer. It should not be interpreted that the Muslim is a passive and complacent person that relies totally on God for all his needs. The prayer teaches the Muslim that he must constantly be reminded that every good outcome in life is from Allāh's blessing and that man is a weak creature even though he may be able to perform the greatest tasks. The prayer hinders man from the arrogance he feels when he is able to subdue the great forces of the world to his need. He must understand that what he can or will be able to achieve or create in this world is but an atom's weigh of measure compared to the Power and Wisdom of Allāh The Most High.

The two *rak'a* Istikhāra Prayer is performed whenever the Muslim is in doubt about committing an action. The Muslim prays for direct guidance from Allāh and His Blessings with the decision arrived through the prayer. The prayer teaches the Muslim to unite his daily affairs directly in the performance of prayers such that he constantly feels the presence of Allāh The Most Beneficent in every aspect of his life.

The last prayer to be described is the Taubah Prayer. This prayer may be performed by any Muslim at any time (except the forbidden times of prayer) he or she wishes to repent from the remorse of a committed sin aware only by him or herself. However for grave sins which involve any other Muslim, the repentance process includes a confession to the inflicted party or else the Taubah Prayer is invalid. For instance, if one is involved in backbiting or slander, then he or she must secure the forgiveness of the persons concerned by confessing every word which has been uttered against the person. Repentance of a Muslim is accepted only after the confession is made and not before.

In conclusion, two points with regards to the *sunna* prayers should be remembered. The *sunna* prayers must not be looked upon only as some 'extra credit' deeds that would add more rewards to the Muslim in the hereafter. Although the ḥadīth about the importance of the *sunna* prayer can be interpreted as extra deeds that may 'patch up' any weaknesses of the *fard* prayers, the importance of each *sunna* prayer

points out to the prayers being more than what they seem from the *ḥadīth*. The fact that the Prophet had never missed them if he was not traveling or on a war expedition proves its importance. The *sunna* prayer, especially those of the individual types, should be seen as a measure of a Muslim's faith. The more prayers he performs individually without the notice of anyone, increases his faith and relationship to God.

GLOSSARY

adhān - The call for Muslims to perform the daily obligatory prayers and the Friday Prayers.

ahl-suffā - When the Prophet's mosque was completed in Madīna, there were many emigrants, and poor or homeless Muslims who lived in one part of the mosque. There were also those who have property and homes but chose to stay with the Prophet in order to learn from him. These early Muslims were known as the *ahl suffā*.

'akīka - Sacrificing a lamb in celebration of the birth of a Muslim child. It is not an obligatory act but a voluntary act of charity as the meat is distributed to the poor.

al-bayt - Literally the word means 'the house'. In the Qur'ān it refers to the Ka'ba.

baraka - Spiritual blessings.

Barzakh - The world in which the dead souls reside until The Day of Judgment.

bay'a - A pledge of allegiance and loyalty associated mainly with the acceptance of a candidate for the office of the Caliphate.

Dār-al-Ḥakam - A courthouse building.

dhikr - Usually refers to phrases uttered in remembrance of Allāh.

Dhuhā Prayer - A supererogatory prayers performed individually before the time of the Zuhr Prayers.

dikka - A raised platform built to synchronise the congregation in prayers. The platform is placed in the middle of a huge prayer space where an *imām*'s assistance would pray on it and pronounce the *takbirs*

after the *imām* so that those in the back rows could see and immitate him. With the advent of the amplifier system the *dikka* is redundant.

djami' - Literally, it means 'a gathering place'. In architecture it refers to mosques in which the Friday Prayers are allowed to be conducted.

djihad - The act of striving in performing righteous acts and in its ultimate meaning the act of defending Islam in a military confrontation.

fard - A ritual or duty considered as obligatory upon Muslims.

hadj - The Holy Pilgrimage to Makka.

Hājat Prayers - A special supererogatory prayers that can be performed either individually or in congregation to ask Allāh The Most High for a specific request.

hidjra - The word refers to the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions from the city of Makka to Madīna.

'ibādāt - Literally the word means the act of worship. In Islam all actions whether they are specific religious rituals or any mundane activities are considered as *'ibādāt* if performed with the intention of pleasing Allāh The Most High.

'Id-ul-Aḍḥā - The Muslim annual celebration of the Holy Pilgrimage to Makka which culminates in the ritualistic sacrifice of livestock in remembrance of the prophet Ibrāhīm's trial of having to sacrifice his firstborn which Allāh The Most Wise had replaced with a lamb.

'Id-ul-Fiṭr - The Muslim annual celebration day after the fasting month of Ramadhān.

Ijtihād - A religious verdict or opinion pronounced by Muslim jurists based on various methods of reasoning concerning any matter which has no direct precedence or verdict in either the *ḥadīth* or the *Qur'ān*.

'īdgāh - A *ḳiblā* wall in an open field used primarily for the performance of the 'Id prayers in imitation of the Prophet's Sunna of performing these prayers in an open field.

ikāma - The second call to prayers to denote that the *imām* is ready to commence prayers.

imām - A prayer leader or a great religious scholar or leader.

Istikhāra Prayer - A supererogatory prayer performed individually when a Muslim is uncertain concerning opposite choices of action.

i'tikāf - The act of staying in mosques for a determined length of period.

janabat - The state of major spiritual defilement brought about by menstruation and sexual intercourse.

kampung - A Malay word for 'village'.

khutbā - A religious sermon given during the Friday Prayers, Eclipse Prayers and 'Id Prayers.

ḳiblā - The direction of prayer which is towards the Ka'ba in Makka.

kulliya - A complex of mosques, madrasa and social welfare facilities.

ḳurbān - The act of sacrificing livestock on the day of the Holy Pilgrimage.

kursī - A piece of furniture meant solely to hold the Ḳur'ān during formal recitation which can usually be found in mosques and Muslim houses.

Lailat al-Kadr - Literally, the phrase means 'The Night of Power'. It is a night in Ramadhān where the Prophet mentions that the Ḳur'ān was

first revealed and the rewards for worshipping in this particular night is professed by him to be better than a thousand nights of worship. The act of *i'tikāf* in the mosque by Muslims in Ramadhān is aimed at trying to discover spiritually this night.

Li'ān - When a spouse accuses the other of infidelity without producing four witnesses, both of them must perform the *li'ān* ritual where each would swear in Allāh's name that he or she is innocent of the accusation or that the other party was guilty of the act and also invoke a curse on his or her self if they were lying. The couple would then be considered divorced and never allowed to join with one another again.

madrasa - A mosque or a house specifically used as an educational institution.

maḡṣūra - An enclosed screen near the *miḥrāb* where a caliph and his personal guard used to pray which is popularly interpreted to be a security device against any assassination attempt.

ma'mūn - The Muslim congregants in prayer.

masḡid - Literally it means 'a place of prostration'. In architecture it means the building type known as the mosque. In the context of mosques in some Middle Eastern countries, the word refers to a quarter mosque or tribal mosque in which the *imām* has no jurisdiction from the government to conduct the Friday Prayers.

miḥrāb - A niche in the *qiblā* wall where the *imām* prays.

minbar - A platform or a pulpit for the delivery of a sermon or a formal speech in mosques.

mu'adhḡin - The person who pronounces loudly the *adhān*.

mu'min - The ideal Muslim.

muṣallā - A room or a place designated to be used as a place of prayer.

nazar - A private pledge between a Muslim and Allāh The Most High in which the Muslim may promise to perform certain special meritorious acts if his or her personal request in this world is fulfilled.

qariah - A mosque neighbourhood.

qiyam-u-lail - Standing in prayer all night. This refers mainly to the act of waking up before the break of dawn to perform a long Tahadjjud Prayer.

rak'a - The Islamic rite of prayers or *ṣalāt* comprises of a series of repeated sequence of actions. Each of these sequence of actions is denoted as a *rak'a*.

Ramadhān - The Muslim month of fasting.

Rawatib Prayers - Supererogatory prayers performed individually immediately after or before the five daily obligatory prayers.

sadaka - Voluntary charity which ranges from donating money to giving a friendly smile to others.

saff - Prayer rows.

Ṣahābah - The first generation Muslims who knew and was close to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

sajd - The act of prostration.

salam - Literally, the word connotes 'peace' but in the context of prayers and social interaction it stands for the Muslim form of greeting of *assalamualaikum* or peace be upon you.

ṣalāt - The Muslim prayer ritual.

Ṣalāt al-'Asr - One of the five daily obligatory prayers performed in the evening or late afternoon.

Ṣalāt al-'Ishā' - One of the five daily obligatory prayers performed at night before dawn.

Ṣalāt al-Janaiz - The Funeral Prayers performed in front of the dead body which have been bathed and wrapped in white cloth.

Ṣalāt al-Juma' - The obligatory Friday Prayers performed in congregation by Muslims who reside in a community.

Ṣalāt al-Maghrīb - One of the five daily obligatory prayers performed after sunset.

Ṣalāt al-Subh - One of the five daily obligatory prayers performed at dawn.

Ṣalāt al-Zuhr - One of the five daily obligatory prayers performed in the middle of the day in the afternoon.

Shari'a - Literally it means 'the way to water' but in the context of Islamic jurisprudence it refers to the code of life of Islam as defined by the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) Sunna contain in the compilation of the Al-Hadīth.

shirk - The great sin of setting up rival deities to Allāh The Most High.

Sunna - A particular lifestyle or pattern of life. The Prophet Muhammad's Sunna refers to his pattern of life and values.

sunna - The opposite of fard. Rituals and actions considered as supererogatory.

Surā - A kind of 'chapter' in the Qur'ān.

surau - A type of Malaysian mosque which has no jurisdiction for the performance of the Friday Prayers. It is equivalent to the Middle Eastern *masdjid*.

sutra - an object placed in front of a person during prayer as an invisible barrier between anyone passing in front of the worshipper.

tabhane - Accommodation spaces in mosques.

Tābi'ūn - The second generation Muslims who knew and studied directly under the supervision of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) Sahaba or Companions.

tafsīr - Usually related to Qur'ānic exegesis.

Tahadjud Prayers - A supererogatory prayers performed individually after one awakens late at night after performing the Ṣalāt al-'Ishā'

Tahiyyah al- Masdjid - The supererogatory prayer performed individually when a Muslim enters any mosque.

takbir - The audible pronouncement of Allāhu Akbar which means 'Allāh is The Greatest'.

talqin - A ritual developed by later Muslims of the Shafie Madhab or school of jurisprudence in relation to burying the dead. The leader of the funeral procession would give a short sermon to remind both the dead and the living of the trials in the graves and the manner of answering the questions put forth by the two angels of death.

Tarāwikh Prayers - The supererogatory prayer performed individually or congregationally during the fasting month of Ramadhān.

Tasbih Prayer - A supererogatory prayer of praising Allāh The Most High.

tashahhud - A supplication uttered during the sitting position in *ṣalāt*.

Taubah Prayer - Prayer of repentance which is considered as a supererogatory act.

tawāf - The ritual of circumambulating the Ka'ba as part of the many obligatory rites of the Holy Pilgrimage to Makka.

tayammum - The rite of ablution performed using clean sand or dust in the event of a scarcity of water.

ummā - The whole Muslim people in the world.

'ulamā - Religious scholars.

wakaf - Endowment property in which the blessings and rewards from its use will continue to benefit the Muslim who has passed away.

Witr Prayer - A supererogatory prayer to 'close' or 'end' the prayers of the day.

zakāt - The obligatory minimum amount of 'tax' on a Muslim's excess income and property for the purposes of charity.

zulla - The covered portion of mosques which houses the *miḥrāb*, *minbar* and the main prayer space.